

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR
RESOURCE EDUCATION**

APRIL 2006

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INTRODUCTION

RESOURCE EDUCATION AND THIS PLAN

The National Park Service faces significant challenges to our traditional management of park resources. To serve and engage an increasingly diverse public, we must recognize that education in its broadest sense is integral to park management. (*Inspiring Places, Inspiring People, An Education Strategy for the Alaska and Pacific West Regions of the National Park Service, 2000, page 6*)

Education should become a primary mission of the National Park Service. Budgets, priorities, and organization should reflect this commitment. (*National Park System Advisory Board Report, 2000, page 10*)

As the national park system moves into the twenty-first century, national park units like Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks face new and unprecedented challenges. Issues such as global climate change and national fire policy require that parks formulate and communicate management directions on a scale that is unprecedented in the agency's experience. Even more than in the past, successful park management now requires a well informed public that understands and supports park mission and management.

As put forth in Chapter 7 of *NPS Management Policies 2001*, it has long been recognized by the National Park Service (NPS) that the key to developing and sustaining public support is an effective and fully developed program to communicate park values and issues to the public. Originally, this work was done in national parks by rangers who were described as "naturalists." In recent decades, reflecting that the message has become much more than just natural history, such programs have been called "interpretation." The target audience for both naturalists and interpreters has always been park visitors.

Today, with the parks facing a broader array of issues than ever before, interpretation for park visitors is increasingly being seen as just one important element in a larger initiative called "resource education." Resource education is usefully defined as an integrated program of communication initiatives intended to involve not only park visitors but also park neighbors, interested parties, and the general public in park and park issues. The general goals of resource education are: (1) strengthening public interest in the parks; (2) increasing public awareness of the NPS and its mission; (3) generating increased awareness of the accelerating problems facing parks; and (4) building public support for the Service's management initiatives and programs as it struggles to preserve parks in the 21st century.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI) have embraced the concept of Resources Education. In response to this widening of the definition of what was previously know as interpretation, it is proposed that the existing park division of "Interpretation and Cultural Resources" be retitled the division of "Resource Education, Partnerships, and Cultural Resources."

At Sequoia and Kings Canyon, a full spectrum resource education plan will entail the following primary elements:

- Orientation Services (visitor center information desks)

This traditional interpretive service provides the primary personal contact point between the NPS and park visitors. When done well, it transfers not only basic orientation data, but also related resource issues. In most parks, information desk contacts greatly outnumber other face-to-face resource education contacts. For most visitors this is the critical point at which the NPS defines what it is. Visitor centers are the parks' most effective means of achieving direct personal contact with a broad variety of park visitors. Maintaining an NPS presence in visitor centers is thus a significant priority.

- Interpretive Programs (walks and talks)

Conducted walks and talks (field interpretation) are the Service's longest established communication medium for direct personal contact with park visitors. Many of our older parks had well developed field naturalist programs well before Mission 66 began the construction of visitor centers. For many years these activities formed the heart of the Service's vision of interpretation, and although they remain highly effective, today they must be considered as just one of many resource education tools. Guided walks and talks nevertheless remain a highly effective way of communicating sophisticated messages to reasonably educated park visitors. Generally, they are less effective as a means of diversity outreach.

- Interpretive Roving and Assigned Stations:

An effective way for rangers and other educational staff to contact park visitors and share important messages is to be present in areas of heavy visitor use and available to answer questions. Examples vary from key park features like the General Sherman and General Grant trees, to public areas neighboring in the parks' "villages," to areas of high visitor concentration like campgrounds and lodges.

- Standards-based educational services (for school groups)

In recent years, the Service has seen an enormous increase in standards-based educational programming. The goal of this programming is to find ways to connect park stories and issues into existing state and national education curricula. The opportunity here is very significant. For the past decade, there has been a national trend towards strengthening educational standards and testing. Classroom teachers are strongly influenced by these initiatives, and are often highly responsive when the NPS offers carefully designed programming intended to support existing required curricula and standards. Because of the cultural diversity present in the public school system, standards-based educational services are a highly effective means of outreaching to

portions of society that have not been fully exposed to national park values and issues. Standards-based education services can be presented both in parks and as outreach services in non-park settings.

- Interpretive Media

Various forms of interpretive media offer enormous potential for communicating park messages. These include web pages, free publications such as park newspapers and site bulletins, wayside exhibits, visitor center exhibits, and electronic media such as low-wattage radio. Full-service national parks must employ all these forms of communication.

- Public Information/Public Affairs

Traditionally, the public information/public affairs function has been perceived by most parks as distinct and separate from interpretation. What is now clear, however, is that these functions are a critical part of an integrated resource education program. Public information/public affairs should be seen as that portion of the resource education program that communicates with the general public through the news and entertainment media.

Within the Public Affairs context, the specialized world of fire education in some parks also calls for attention. Although a number of these parks have established fire education positions within their fire management programs, fire education is really a focused subset of public affairs program that provides not only information but also perspective and background about these potentially controversial management programs.

- Partnerships

Contemporary resource education programs almost always involve working with partnerships. Cooperating associations, field institutes, and friends groups often play significant roles in representing our parks and their issues to public. In this context it is critical that our partners be integrated into coordinated resource education programs. Partners provide both additional means of communicating with target group and important opportunities for feedback loops. Management of partnerships and the messages delivered by and through them is a critical element of resource education.

Recognizing that resource education is likely to be one of the keys factor in determining the success of Sequoia and Kings Canyon in coming decades, these parks have prepared the following plan. The goal of these pages is to provide guidance regarding how all the park's resource education needs are to be addressed during the next few decades. In

essence this plan replaces in an augmented form the more narrowly drawn document known as a *Comprehensive Interpretive Plan*.

The advantage of planning for the entirety of a park's resources education program rather than just addressing its interpretive program is obvious. Interpretation is just one inter-related element in the larger world of resources education.

This plan also breaks with tradition in two other ways. The first is that the *Comprehensive Plan for Resource Education* at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks provides not just a single recommended plan but also alternatives. These alternatives are described and analyzed; a preferred alternative is then proposed. It is the parks' hope that this approach will provide a richer and more useful base for the parks' educational program.

The other distinctive element of this plan is that it defines not only an optimum program for the future of resources education at Sequoia and Kings Canyon, but also specific guidance for program activity at lower capacity levels. This path has been followed because current trends seem to be shrinking the capacity of traditional funding sources to support national park educational programs. Under the subject of "program capacity," this plan will thus address not only optimum programming but also how funding might most effectively be invested to meet the parks' needs at reduced program capacity levels.

Finally, it should be noted that this is not a plan for physical facilities. In general, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks have extensive and well developed interpretive facilities. Although there are some condition issues with these facilities, no major new interpretive facilities are proposed in this plan. Instead, this plan focuses primarily on how to use existing facilities most effectively to meet the parks' education goals.

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PART I – BACKGROUND FOR PLANNING

AGENCY POLICY AND GUIDANCE

MANAGEMENT POLICIES:

Guidance for all NPS activities can be found in the *Management Policies* guidebook. Chapter 7 of this publication establishes basic targets for the interpretation and education programs at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Following are some of the key policy statements that inform and guide this plan:

Through interpretive and educational programs, the National Park Service will instill in park visitors an understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the significance of parks and their resources. Interpretive and educational programs will encourage the development of a personal stewardship ethic, and broaden public support for preserving park resources.

The purpose of National Park Service interpretive and educational programs is to provide memorable educational and recreational experiences, and to foster the development of a personal stewardship ethic. The Service's programs will do this by forging a connection between park resources, visitors, the community, and park management. Programs will be successful when they use the right combination of original objects and places, firsthand experience, and effective media. For the purposes of this chapter, the terms "visitor" and "park visitor" are defined as anyone who uses a park's interpretive and educational services, regardless of where such use occurs.

The Service will maintain the organizational capability to deliver high- quality interpretive services. High- quality interpretation will be the shared responsibility of all levels of NPS staff, from the Washington and regional directorates, through park superintendents and chief interpreters, to field interpreters and non- interpretive staff. It will be achieved through interpretive and educational services, media, ongoing research, planning, technical excellence in implementation, a well- trained staff, broad public input, and continual reevaluation.

An effective park interpretive and educational program will include:

- *Informational and orientation programs that provide visitors with easy access to the information they need to have a safe and enjoyable park experience.*
- *Interpretive programs that provide both on- and off- site presentations, and are designed to encourage visitors to form their own intellectual or emotional connections with the resource. All successful interpretive programs achieve significance by linking specific tangible artifacts, buildings, and places with ideas, events, and concepts. Interpretive programs facilitate a connection between the interests of visitors and the meanings of the park.*
- *Curriculum- based educational programs that link park themes to national standards and state curricula, and involve educators in planning and development. These programs usually include pre- visit and post- visit materials, address different learning styles, include an evaluation mechanism, and provide learning experiences linked directly to clear objectives. Programs develop a thorough understanding of a park's resources in individual, regional, national, and global contexts, and of the park's place within the national park system.*

- *Interpretive media that provide visitors with relevant park information, and facilitate more in-depth understanding of— and personal connection with— park themes and resources.*

All parks will have a current [Comprehensive Interpretive Plan] as defined in Director's Order #6 and Reference Manual 6. The CIP, initiated by the superintendent, and prepared by field staff with support from a regional office or the Harpers Ferry Center (HFC), will form the overall long-term vision and basis for decisions about interpretive and educational programs in the park. It will provide both long- and short- range views, and deal with all media and personal services. The CIP will include the long range interpretive plan, the annual interpretive plan, and the interpretive database.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN:

At the park level, general program guidance comes from each park's *General Management Plan* (GMP). This is the plan that set long-term goals for each of the park's programs. Sequoia and Kings Canyon have just completed a GMP. Specific references in the plan to interpretation and education include the following:

(Numerical references are to the 2004 draft GMP alternatives matrix.)

1. *PARK VISION: Stronger educational and outreach programs provide enjoyment and instill park conservation values.*
16. *EDUCATION FACILITIES/PARKSWIDE: Expand, redesign, or add educational facilities.*
17. *PARK EDUCATION/INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS/PARKSWIDE : Prepare a comprehensive interpretive plan. Increase park orientation in developed areas. Expand ranger naturalist programs that focus on understanding and helping preserve resources, safety, and teaching backcountry skills. Increase interpretation of cultural resources. Provide more day use educational opportunities.*
18. *EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE PARKS/PARKSWIDE: Support resource protection efforts within the parks through greatly enlarged outreach efforts. Develop numerous partnerships. Have NPS staff and/or partners take programs to many regional classrooms. Create a classroom-focused Website to share the parks' missions. Connect the parks with a more diverse public by enlarging educational efforts outside the parks.*
170. *VISITOR FACILITIES/CEDAR GROVE: Provide a visitor center.*
191. *EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES/GRANT GROVE: Redesign and expand the visitor center. Consider the gas station for a potential visitor facility.*
199. *TRAIL SYSTEM/GRANT GROVE: Provide an enhanced, self-guided trail system for Grant Grove and the surrounding area.*
200. *BIG STUMP: Manage to maintain visible logging history as well as to illustrate a recovering giant sequoia grove.*
232. *VISITOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS/WUKSACHI : Increase traditional ranger naturalist programs.*
233. *VISITOR FACILITIES/WUKSACHI: Provide an amphitheater for NPS interpretive programs.*

251. *VISITOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES/LODGEPOLE: Retain the visitor center and develop new thematic exhibits and programs with a wilderness emphasis. Remove the nature center.*
288. *VISION/GIANT FOREST: The desired visitor experience is a walk in the woods to see the Big Trees. Visitors focus on the Giant Forest Museum/Big Trees Trail area, the General Sherman Tree, Moro Rock, and Crescent Meadow.*
294. *GIANT FOREST VISITOR FACILITIES: Maintain the Giant Forest Museum, interpretive waysides, shuttles stops, residence, education center, restrooms at the museum area, museum overflow parking, Big Trees, Trail at Round Meadow, Moro Rock, Crescent Meadow, Sherman Tree, and trail centers.*
295. *INTEPRETATION/EDUCATION/GIANT FOREST: A Giant Forest Museum provides visitor information desk. Provide self-guiding interpretive opportunities at the museum along with adjoining Big Trees and Hazelwood trails, and along the Congress Grove Trail.*
296. *INTERPRETATION/EDUCATION/GIANT FOREST: Provide ranger-naturalist interpretive services at key locations in the grove.*
297. *BEETLE ROCK RECREATION HALL: Adaptively reuse Beetle Rock as a year-round, day-use only center that provides a site for park-related educational activities.*
304. *VISION/CRYSTAL CAVE: Crystal Cave provides the primary public opportunity to experience the parks' significant cave resources.*
306. *CAVE TOURS/CRYSTAL CAVE: Retain a variety of tours.*
- 321/322. *VISITOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES: Expand the Foothills Visitor Center within the current building to meet visitor demand. Explore opportunities with outside partners for orientation, education, and management.*
359. *EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES/MINERAL KING: Provide for higher levels of day use; provide more interpretive services and displays. Manage Atwell sequoia grove to better interpret the logging story.*

The *General Management Plan* establishes long-term goals for these parks to pursue over the next several decades. The CIP/CPRE, on the other hand, is intended to provide guidance for a shorter period of only 5-10 years. Over the longer term, these parks will seek to implement all GMP goals. During the shorter term of this CIP/CPRE, however, it will not be possible to carry out the entire GMP program. This plan identifies and pursues those portions of the GMP vision that seem most appropriate and possible at this time.

Taken in total, this body of agency guidance: (1) defines the role of interpretation and education at SEKI, (2) identifies appropriate methods for pursuing this work, (3) calls for a park-specific *Comprehensive Interpretive Plan* and defines that plan, and (4) provides a general vision of the role of resource education in these parks. These points form the starting points for this planning effort.

MISSION, PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARKS

To understand the parks' resource education program, it is necessary to understand the parks. SEKI's 2005 draft *General Management Plan* confirms the mission, purpose, and significance statements for Sequoia and Kings Canyon that were first laid out in the parks' 1997 *Strategic Plan*.

MISSION:

The mission of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks is to protect forever the greater Sierran ecosystem – including the sequoia groves and high Sierra regions of the parks – and its natural evolution, and to provide appropriate opportunities to present and future generations to experience and understand park resources and value.

PURPOSE:

It is the purpose of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks to:

- *Protect forever the greater Sierran ecosystem – including the sequoia groves and high Sierra regions of the parks – and its natural evolution;*
- *Provide appropriate opportunities to present and future generations to experience and understand park resources and values;*
- *Protect and preserve significant cultural resources;*
- *Champion the values of national parks and wilderness.*

PARK SIGNIFICANCE:

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are special and unique places because they have:

- *The largest sequoia trees and groves in the world, including the world's largest tree – the General Sherman Tree;*
- *An extraordinary continuum of ecosystems arrayed along the greatest vertical relief (1,370 to 14,495 feet elevation) of any protected area in the lower 48 states;*
- *The highest, most rugged portion of the high Sierra, which is part of the largest contiguous alpine environment in the lower 48 states;*
- *Magnificent, deep, glacially carved canyons, including Kings Canyon, Tehipite Valley, and Kern Canyon;*
- *The core of the largest area of contiguous wilderness in California, the second largest in the 48 states;*
- *The largest preserved southern Sierra foothills ecosystem;*

- *Almost 200 known marble caverns, many inhabited by cave wildlife that is found nowhere else;*
- *A wide spectrum of prehistoric and historic sites documenting human adaptations in their historic settings throughout the Sierran environments.*

ISSUES AFFECTING RESOURCE EDUCATION

A broad variety of issues affect the resource education program at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. The following are some of the most significant.

REGIONAL ISSUES:

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks occupy the western slope of the southern Sierra Nevada of California. This setting defines a number of fundamental issues. Foremost amongst these is the fact that the San Joaquin Valley area that adjoins the parks on the west is the site of intense human activity. This region is intensely cultivated and is the site of large and growing cities.

Fresno and Tulare Counties, the two counties in which the parks are found, are the two highest production (by value) agricultural counties in the nation. Agricultural lands are farmed intensively for a very large variety of crops ranging from oranges and walnuts to field crops like corn and cotton. San Joaquin Valley agriculture is heavily dependent upon both irrigation and chemicals. Each of these affects the parks and their resources. Irrigation in the region downstream from the parks depends very significantly on the natural runoff from parks streams and especially from the Kings, Kaweah, and Kern Rivers. In the past this relationship has led to pressure to build reservoirs in or near the parks. For the moment these pressures seem largely stilled but climate change may lead to their resurrection.

San Joaquin Valley agriculture makes very heavy use of many different types of chemicals, including fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, fumigants, soil modifiers, and defoliants. Studies have demonstrated that a very significant portion of the chemicals applied on Central California fields vaporize and drift eastward into the Sierra Nevada. Some studies suggest that up to 90% of some specific chemicals drift away from application sites. Many of these chemicals can now be measured in the parks' ecosystems. Long-term effects of chemical drift are not well understood, but research is underway in a number of areas including in particular effects on amphibian populations.

The cities of Fresno and Tulare Counties are growing rapidly. As of 2005, the City of Fresno claimed a population of about 450,000 while Visalia, the biggest urban center in Tulare County, provided homes for about 105,000. This human population is growing rapidly, with an average gain of about 2% per annum.

Another important factor about the human populations of Central California is that they are highly diverse. Throughout its history, the San Joaquin Valley has been a destination for immigrants. To name only some of the many ethnic groups that have sought out the Valley, one could mention Japanese, Armenians, Swedes, Hmong, and Vietnamese. During the Great Depression, the Valley was a major destination for Dust Bowl refugees from Oklahoma and Arkansas. Today, nearly half of the Valley's residents speak Spanish as a native language, and the full diversity of the Valley's population is one of its

strongest characteristics. An additional useful observation about the regional population is that it has relatively low education and income levels. All of these factors affect the ability of the parks to communicate.

AGENCY IDENTITY ISSUES:

Despite the fact that they have been a part of Central California since the late nineteenth century, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks do not have an identity that is clearly understood by many of their neighbors. This situation results, in large part, from the confusing names that federal agencies have applied to their reservations in the southern Sierra. Side by side, one can find not only Sequoia National Park, but also Sequoia National Forest, and Giant Sequoia National Monument. In addition to national parks and national forests, the region also contains “state demonstration forests” and university research forests. It is no wonder that visitors become confused.

All this would be academic if it were not for the fact that recreational users actually do need to know where they are. The adjoining national parks and national forests, for example, have different missions and management goals, offer different types of recreational opportunities, and require that visitors abide by different sets of laws and regulations.

RESOURCE ISSUES:

As the 21st century begins, it is apparent that Sequoia and Kings Canyon face daunting natural resource issues. Several of these are particularly significant.

Fire management has long been a major issue in the southern Sierra national parks. The combination of large acreages of woody vegetation, high summer temperatures, and a Mediterranean climate where there is little or no precipitation from May until October, have produced an environment where fire naturally plays a major role. Most Sierran ecosystems are fire adapted as are many individual organisms including things as divergent as beetle species and giant sequoia trees.

Following the national pattern, Sequoia and Kings Canyon initiated a policy of wide-spread fire suppression in the early twenty century. This interruption of the natural fire regime led inevitably to fuel buildup, which were first documented in the 1960s. By the late 1970s, after a decade of study and experimental burning, SEKI implemented a fire management program that sought to restore fire’s natural role in the environment. This program continues today.

Fire management is controversial in a number of ways. It not only contradicts many visitor’s beliefs about the necessity of fire control, but also modifies landscapes and produces smoke that affects both visitors and neighboring communities.

Air quality issues have risen steadily in importance in recent decades in the Sequoia and Kings Canyon region. Because of its natural geography, which is hot, dry, and mountain-rimmed, the southern San Joaquin Valley is a nearly perfect place to collect and intensify summer smog. From May into October each year, the Valley suffers some of the worst air quality conditions in the nation. Each summer day, warm up-canyon winds move these pollutants up the western slope of the Sierra Nevada and into Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Middle altitude areas like Grant Grove and Giant Forest are particularly hard hit.

Air pollution in the SEKI region takes many forms, but the most damaging is ozone, which damages living tissues including everything from tree leaves to human lungs. On many summer days, signs in parks visitor centers warn visitors that they should not exercise in the parks. Visibility problems, caused by particulate pollution, affects visitors in other ways. What ought to be grand vistas of high peaks are merely hazy views. Yet other pollution issues relate to active chemicals released by agricultural and industrial endeavors.

Communicating air quality issues to visitors can be difficult. Many visitors are surprised and dismayed to find that air quality in a national park may be inferior to the city in which they live.

Marijuana cultivation has grown to be a very significant park problem in recent years. Focused largely in the foothills area of Sequoia National Park, large-scale cultivation first came to the attention of park management in the late 1990s. Despite intense efforts to limit use, the problem has persisted since that time. The impacts of this illegal cultivation of some of the parks' most rugged foothill terrain vary from vegetation disturbance, to fertilizer and pesticide pollution, to water diversion from natural sources. The very high value of the illegal products of this cultivation provide a strong incentive for violence.

Marijuana cultivation is largely limited to areas that are, for the most part, not heavily used by park visitors. The climatic limitations of marijuana as a crop discourage its cultivation in the giant sequoia belt or the High Sierra. The activity, nevertheless, represents the most fundamental disturbance of park resources since the extinguishment of illegal sheep grazing and logging a century ago. Some of the parks' rarest biological environments are being severely disturbed.

Sharing this issue with park visitors requires careful balance. The park must both warn and reassure visitors about the safety of their visits. At the same time it must make a case why park resources should be invested in marijuana control rather than in recreation services.

Unfortunately, climate change potentially trumps all these other resource issues. Because of their extreme relief and very wide variety of environments, Sequoia and Kings Canyon are particularly susceptible to the negative impacts of a warming climate. If the climate were to warm by 3-4 degrees Fahrenheit in coming decades, which is within the range of many current climate models, nearly all of the native plants of these parks would be

growing in the wrong microclimates. The resulting long-term damage to the parks' ecosystems is likely to be severe.

In this context, the immediate cause of climate change is not a critical issue. What is clear from long-term records of things as varied as glacial structures, river run-off cycles, and bird migration behavior is that the parks' climate has been warming in recent decades at a rate unmatched in thousands of years.

Talking about climate change to visitors is a challenging undertaking. The issue carries considerable political baggage, yet cannot be ignored. It is, in the long run, by far the most severe threat to the future of the parks as they were originally created. Climate change literally has the potential to undermine the very purposes for which these parks were created.

CULTURAL ISSUES:

Several of the most significant issues facing the parks arise not directly from changes in park resources but are based within our culture.

To large segments of our society, tourism is the primary purpose of these parks. Although the organic act that created the National Park Service in 1916 clearly makes visitor enjoyment subordinate to resource protection, the parks spend the great majority of their budget in the support of various recreational activities, including recreational learning. Today this tourism is changing. Visits to the parks are increasingly short and hurried. A majority of parks visitors are day-users. This contrasts strongly with times past when most visitors either camped or stayed in park lodges, often for a week or longer at a time. Engaging short-term visitors in learning experiences is difficult. They have little time to get out of their private vehicles and explore the parks. Yet, nearly all of the parks' most powerful experiences come from taking time among the trees and along the trails.

A second significant cultural issue results from broad scale demographic change. Many of the current residents of California have come recently from cultures that do not have strong traditions related to the stewardship of wild lands and natural resources. This results in less identity with the concept of national parks as "national treasures" to be shared by all.

Scientific literacy is a third cultural issue of increasing importance to the parks. As the diversity of park users broadens, the traditionally high levels of education that typified more narrowly drawn users in the past has weakened. As a whole, American citizens are not well versed in science. A recent study conducted by the Northwestern University Medical School concluded that only 20-25 percent of Americans are "scientifically savvy and alert." The remaining majority has limited information available to understand the natural world. As examples, the study notes that 20% of Americans believe that the sun circles the earth and that fewer than a third understand the role DNA plays in heredity.

As the challenges facing national parks intensify, the parks' need to communicate effectively with the public about complex scientific issues increases steadily. It's hard to explain fire management without some understanding of plant evolution. It's difficult to explain pollution patterns and affects without some knowledge of chemistry and biology. Increasingly, it seems, national parks will need to teach these subjects and others as a part of explaining parks' mission and management.

TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILES

The resource education program at Sequoia and Kings Canyon faces a large and complex set of potential audiences, each of which has distinct interests and specific information needs. Understanding these audiences is an important part of designing a resource education program.

PARK VISITORS:

Park visitors constitute the most traditional of the parks' information audiences and have been the target of the parks' interpretive program for many decades.

Visitor use statistics are maintained separately for the two parks:

CALENDAR YEAR	SEQUOIA	KINGS CANYON	TOTAL COMBINED VISTATION
1992	928,228	624,648	1,552,876
1993	1,031,594	612,597	1,664,191
1994	1,034,493	727,162	1,761,655
1995	845,412	838,145	1,683,557
1996	838,420	513,021	1,351,441
1997	1,028,663	511,168	1,539,831
1998	881,587	581,804	1,463,391
1999	874,037	601,752	1,475,789
2000	839,307	560,095	1,399,402
2001	870,684	575,132	1,445,816
2002	923,351	577,482	1,500,833
2003	988,776	577,738	1,566,514
2004	1,003,342	590,078	1,593,420
2005	982,964	612,928	1,595,892

It should be noted that the "total combined visitation" sums double-count visitors who travel through both parks. If a number were to be generated that counted total visitation to both parks as a single park unit, it would be approximately one-third lower than the combined visitation sums reported here.

Statistics from years before 1992 show higher figures for both parks, but these were compiled using a different statistical base. It appears that the overall number of visitors has been relatively stable in recent years.

Within these figures there is a very strong seasonal pattern, with July being the busiest month and December the quietest. Generally, two-thirds of all park visitation occurs in the five-month period running from May through September.

The most recent effort by the NPS to understand park visitors was the *Visitor Study* carried out during the summer of 2002. This study collected 555 responses to a detailed questionnaire, a 68.6% return rate. Much significant information was collected:

- The most common visiting unit (58% of the sample) was the family. An additional 15% were traveling in groups that included both family and friends.
- When analyzed by age, visitors reflected the family orientation with the two highest categories being children ten and younger and adults of child-bearing age.
- According to the survey, less than 10% of visitors were over 60 years of age.
- Only 10% of the sample identified themselves as Hispanic.
- 86% reported that English was their primary language.
- Education levels were high, with 56% reporting a bachelors degree or higher within their group.
- More than half (55%) reported visiting more than once during their lifetimes.
- Californians represented 65% of total visitation. No other state provided more than 2% of overall visitation.
- Approximately 10% of the sample came from outside the United States.
- Day-use visitors (less than 24 hours) reflected 38% of the total. Only 18% of the visitors remained in the park longer than 4 days.
- The biggest sources of pre-visit information were previous visits (51%), friends (40%), guidebooks (37%), and the park web page (37%).
- 76% of visitors saw SEKI as their primary destination during the trip in which they visited the parks.
- The most popular activities were sightseeing/driving (82%), day hiking (62%) and picnicking (38%).
- While in the parks, visitors received their information from the park brochure (92%), the parks newspaper (60%), visitor center exhibits (56%), and visitor center information desks (47%).
- Smaller percentages used other interpretive services including self-guiding trails (45%), evening campfire programs (12%), and ranger-led walks and talks (9%).

In summary, according to the *Visitor Study*, the typical peak-season park visitor in 2002 was a family group with one or more adults with a college-level degree; the group was staying for one or more nights in a park lodge or campground and its members were sightseeing and enjoying hiking and picnicking. Most were Californians, but 10% came from outside the United States.

What this data does not seem to capture, when it is compared to what is happening in the park day-to-day, is that the diversity of park visitors is probably much greater than represented. On many days, and at many sites within the parks, Hispanic use seems to dominate. The percentage of visitors in the study who identified themselves as Hispanic (10%) thus seems very low. Informal attempts to sample visitors in other ways suggest much higher numbers. It is likely that this group was significantly under-reported during this study, reflecting the distrust many Hispanic Californians feel for government in general and especially for the federal government that enforces immigration law.

Other California ethnic groups also seem much more visible than indicated by the figures, especially Californians of Asian or East-Indian descent.

Data from elsewhere in California suggest that the state's Hispanic residents have relatively low education levels. The Asian and East-Indian populations are more complex and harder to typify. Most, however, are relatively new users of national parks.

Because of the time of year at which the study was conducted, it is likely that the overall significance of international visitation was underestimated. During spring and fall, international visitors often seem to dominate the parks.

The study reports that 38% of visitors were visiting the park for less than 24 hours. This data was generated at the time of the year when camping and lodging use is at its peak. If SEKI is in line with other national parks, and this seems likely, then the percentage of day-user is growing steadily. On a year-round basis it is probably approaching 50%.

All this suggests a more complex pattern than captured in the 2002 *Visitor Study*:

- High season use is still dominated by the traditional park visitor – a well-educated family that is staying several days in the parks.
- However, even at peak season, park use in recent years has become strikingly more diverse in its cultural origins; at the same time the number of day-use visitors as a percentage of overall use seems to be growing. Many of these non-traditional park users have relatively limited educations and know little about national parks.
- Spring and fall use is dominated by international travelers, retirees, and young couples without children (many of them international travelers also).
- Winter (snow season) use is dominantly day-use, focuses on snowplay, appears to draw heavily from local populations, and is heavily Hispanic. A smaller group of traditional park visitors resides overnight in park lodges during the winter and enjoys cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

PARK NEIGHBORS:

Another important potential park audience is to be found in the parks' neighbors. Over time, the attitudes of the parks' neighbor about the reservation's mission and management can be expected to have a significant impact upon the parks themselves.

Beginning locally, the parks' most immediate neighbors are to be found in gateway communities. The most immediate gateway community for Sequoia and Kings Canyon is the unincorporated town of Three Rivers, which is located adjacent to the Ash Mountain Entrance. With a population of between 2,500 and 3,000, this dispersed residential community relies heavily on the parks. Not only is the NPS by far the largest local employer, but also a majority of local businesses depend on park tourism for their sustenance. Three Rivers, for example, offers park visitors more than 400 motel rooms.

Like many gateway communities Three Rivers residents hold strong and often divergent opinions about what the parks ought to be and how they are managed.

The State Route 180 corridor leading to the Big Stump Entrance has not yet developed a defined commercial gateway community aimed at park visitors.

Moving beyond the parks' immediate gateway communities, the larger world of Central California begins to come into focus. In recent decades, this region has evolved from a mostly rural and agricultural area to one that contains major urban centers. The two parks are located entirely within the counties of Tulare (population 368,000) and Fresno (population 799,000) (data from 2000 census). The dominant communities in these counties are the cities of Visalia (population 100,000) and Fresno (population 450,000)

Of great significance to understanding this region is the data that the population of Tulare County is 50% Hispanic while that of Fresno is 44%. Both percentages continue to rise. Also significant is that these populations are relatively young. In Tulare County alone, for example, each elementary school grade has about 9,000 students enrolled.

Over 750,000 people now live within 90 minutes travel time of the entrances to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. This is a huge potential audience.

Extending our view to those portions of California that are within five hours of the parks, the potential audience is enlarged to take in the metropolitan areas of Southern California (including Los Angeles, Anaheim, and San Bernardino/Riverside), the San Francisco Bay Area (including San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland), and the Sacramento Metropolitan Area. The total population within this travel zone approaches 30 million persons. The complexity of this potential audience cannot be exaggerated. Nearly every world culture and language is represented. The network of media outlets includes hundreds of newspapers and dozens of major television channels.

OTHER AUDIENCES:

Moving beyond California, interest in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks stretches worldwide. As noted above, a minimum of 10% of the parks' visitors come from outside the United States. Guide books about these parks and their features have been printed in several European languages. Several European cultures, including especially the German and British, seem especially fascinated by the giant sequoias.

The same can be said for school children worldwide. The parks receive numerous letters and emails from students all over the globe seeking information about the parks' resources and features.

ELEMENTS OF THE RESOURCE EDUCATION PROGRAM

To facilitate understanding and provide structure for analysis, this plan organizes the SEKI Resource Education Program into work elements. Each element has a distinct purpose. It is also useful to define which elements best serve which audiences.

VISITOR CENTERS

These parks have three full-service “visitor centers” (Foothills, Lodgepole, and Grant Grove) as well as a fourth facility, the Giant Forest Museum, which functions in the same manner. At Cedar Grove the parks maintain seasonal contact station that provides orientation services on a much smaller scale. The Cedar Grove facility is called a “visitor center,” but does not function on that level since it does not have an exhibit area. (The Wilderness Permit Office also oversees the operation of permit stations at Roads End in Kings Canyon and Mineral King.)

Purpose: To provide basic visitor orientation, answer visitor questions, and share useful informational materials. Through exhibits, to provide visitors with introductory insights into why the parks are significant. Finally, through the cooperation of the Sequoia Natural History Association, to provide visitors with opportunities to purchase informational materials about the parks and/or the natural world. The primary goal at visitor centers is to give visitors the information they need to have enjoyable, safe, low-impact visits to the parks.

Audience: Park visitors; self-selected. No target group. Staff responds to those who come in the door. Visitor center users come from no single group, but tend to reflect the more traditional user groups.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS:

Most interpretive programs takes the form of guided walks, interpretive talks, demonstrations, or campfire programs. These are usually described within the Service as “personal services” because they are presented live by park staff.

Ranger-naturalists, cave naturalists, volunteers, and Sequoia Field Institute staff present these activities at all of the major developed areas of these parks.

Purpose: To involve visitors in experiencing the parks’ resources and to provide interpretive information and informed perspective regarding park resources and mission for the purpose of building and sustaining public support

Audience: Park visitors; self-selected, but affected by marketing efforts. Participants tend to be repeat visitors with deep national park roots; also international visitors seeking in-depth understanding.

ROVING/ASSIGNED STATIONS:

This function takes place at selected, heavily used sites within the parks such as the General Grant and General Sherman Trees. The entrance to Crystal Cave is another site with excellent potential. This function is carried out by ranger-naturalist, volunteers, and cave naturalists.

When the Giant Forest shuttle system is established it will provide new and powerful opportunities for roving and assigned stations work. These include the possibility of placing seasonal ranger-naturalists on shuttle buses and/or at the various destinations served by the system.

Purpose: To contact visitors in recreational settings and provide them with messages that lead them to greater appreciation of the park and its mission.

Audience: Park visitors; employee-selected or self-selected. Potential audience is highly representative of all types of park users. This provides staff with an opportunity to seek out visitors from groups who do not usually participate in interpretive activities or use information desks. These visitors should be given reason to believe that they are genuinely welcome here and that the parks offer something of value to them and their families.

INTERPRETIVE MEDIA:

Interpretive Media communicate park messages through “non-personal” channels including free publications, visitor center exhibits, wayside exhibits, web sites, and TIS (travelers information system) radio broadcasting. The implementation of a shuttle system in Giant Forest will open additional opportunities for media use.

Purpose: To transmit park messages (everything from simple orientation to detailed natural history data, to emergency information) to persons beyond the reach of the parks’ personal services interpretive programming.

Audience: Park visitors, neighbors, and other interested persons; self-selected. Potential users must be attracted to the media. May be affected by marketing. Different media have different potential audiences.

IN-PARK EDUCATION:

In-park educational services provide structured experiences to school groups visiting the parks. Programs are presented at Foothills, Giant Forest/Lodgepole, and Grant Grove by NPS and SNHA staff. Programs are specifically designed for target grades and based on California State Standards.

Purpose: To provide visiting school groups with quality, structured learning experiences that support standards goals for particular grades.

Audience: Park visitors; teacher selected. Groups come primarily from schools within day-use traveling distance from the parks. Grant Grove is by far the most visited venue.

OUTREACH EDUCATION:

Outreach educational services provide structured experiences within classroom settings that are within day-time travel distance of the parks. Programs are specifically designed for target grades and based on California State Standards.

Programs can be provided by either ranger-naturalists or SNHA staff.

Purpose: To take park messages and stories to school children (and their families) who would otherwise never be able to learn about the parks; also to support State education standards.

Audience: School children in neighboring communities, particularly sites where most residents have little or no exposure to the parks.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

The Public Affairs program communicates park stories and values through the news and entertainment media. Messages are communicated primarily through the Public Information Officer, Fire Education Specialist, and Chief of Interpretation. Public Affairs also plays a significant role in community relations, which includes direct outreach efforts to community groups and organizations.

Purpose: To communicate park stories, perspectives and positions to the general public. Media employed are most commonly television, radio, and newspapers. The Public Affairs staff also works with magazine and book authors.

Audience: General public, park neighbors, public officials, interested persons worldwide. Audience usually is exposed the messages as they watch television, read newspapers, etc.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT:

Volunteer Management recruits, places, and otherwise supports persons and/or organizations who wish to volunteer to assist the parks. These persons are termed “Volunteers in Parks” or VIPs.” The program also manages the parks’ small VIP budget and develops VIP reports and statistics. Function also coordinates the parks’ relationship with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) program, which provides the parks with student interns.

Purpose: The purpose of Volunteer Management is to strengthen the parks’ VIP and SCA programs and thus enhance the capacity of all parks programs. Interpretation is a major user of volunteers.

Audience: There is no direct public audience, but many volunteers communicate with visitors as they assist with various other program elements.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT:

Based at park headquarters, this function currently consists of the Chief, Division of Interpretation and Cultural Resources (Chief Park Naturalist), who manages and supervises the Division, and a one-person administrative support office.

When the Giant Forest shuttle system is implemented it is proposed that the functions of NPS liaison and COR (contracting officer’s representative) be added to the management functions of the division.

In the future, if the proposal to rename the educational subdivision of the SEKI workforce as the “Division of Resource Education, Partnerships, and Cultural Resources,” it would be appropriate also to retitle the Chief Park Naturalist’s position with a working title more appropriate to the full range of duties involved.

Purpose: The purpose of Program Management is to provide overall direction, coordination, and vision to all the Division’s programs and to oversee Division-wide administrative functions such as priority setting, hiring, budget, and payroll. The management function also coordinates the interface between the Division and other parks programs and may be asked to assume to the role of representing the NPS to the operators of the Giant Forest shuttle system.

Audience: There is no regular public audience, but the Chief Naturalist represents all parts of the resource education program to the park management team as a whole. This is an important function. By establishing priorities and goals and by setting standards, the Chief Naturalist also affects all the other communication channels.

In conclusion, it is useful to connect SEKI’s program elements with the four basic interpretive functions defined in the NPS *Management Guidelines*:

	Information & Orientation	Interpretive Programs	Standards-Based Education	Interpretive Media
Visitor Centers	XX			XX
Interpretive Programs		XX		
Roving		XX		
Interpretive Media	XX			XX
In-Park Education			XX	
Outreach Education			XX	
Public Affairs	XX			
Volunteer Management	XX	XX	XX	XX
Program Management	XX	XX	XX	XX

DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION:

Any plan for the future of resource education at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks must take into account the existing program and how it has evolved over time.

The concept of resource education at these parks dates back more than eighty years. The first formal program began in the early 1920s, when Walter Fry, who had retired in 1920 from his assignment as the parks' first civilian superintendent, was appointed federal magistrate for Sequoia and General Grant National Parks. Fry, who had been an assiduous student of the natural history of the parks during his years as park ranger, chief ranger, and, finally, superintendent, found that his new position required relatively little time, and with the encouragement of Superintendent John R. White, he began in 1922 to write and distribute nature bulletins about the parks. This effort was well received, and the following year Fry initiated the Sequoia Nature Guide Service, which operated out of a tent museum in Giant Forest. Soon thereafter, the museum function was given a room in the park's 1921 Giant Forest administration building, and the Giant Forest Museum was born.

Fry's efforts paralleled similar initiatives in other national parks, and in the same year that the Sequoia Nature Guide Service began, the National Park Service appointed Yosemite ranger Ansel Hall as the Chief Naturalist for the national parks. Over the next few years, under Hall's leadership and with the strong support of NPS Director Stephen Mather, naturalist positions were created in a number of national parks. Sequoia's turn came in 1929, when Frank Been arrived to become the first permanent staff naturalist for Sequoia and General Grant National Parks. By 1931, Been had a summer staff of two seasonal naturalists working in Giant Forest. The interpretive program as we know it had begun.

During the following decade the naturalist program grew significantly. Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees built formal amphitheaters for evening programs and expanded trails for visitor enjoyment. The Giant Forest Museum was expanded, and in 1939, funds were received to begin the development of a trail within Crystal Cave. The cave opened to the public on May 29, 1940. Two months earlier, following a model developed at Yosemite, Sequoia had initiated its own cooperating Association. The formal establishment of the Sequoia Natural History Association occurred on April 10, 1940.

With the exception of the war years of the 1940s, the interpretive program at Sequoia and Kings Canyon (In 1940, the new Kings Canyon National Park absorbed the much smaller General Grant National Park.) grew steadily over the next several decades. By the late 1970s, as the program approached its peak, permanent naturalist staffs were stationed each summer at Giant Forest/Lodgepole, Dorst Creek Campground, Grant Grove, and

Cedar Grove. Supporting this core group, a summer corps of nearly forty seasonal ranger-naturalists presented programs to the public.

Along the way, a number of key interpretive facilities were constructed, particularly during Mission 66, a ten-year effort initiated during the Eisenhower administration to rehabilitate the national parks in time for the 50th birthday of the National Park Service in 1966. At SEKI, Mission 66 constructed modern visitor centers at Grant Grove and Lodgepole. The same funding source reconstructed the historic amphitheaters at Grant Grove and Lodgepole and built a new facility at Dorst Creek Campground.

The era of steady growth ended in the early 1980s, and in the succeeding quarter century the history of the program has been largely about adjusting to changing times and making efficient use of existing resources. The first significant budget cuts came in 1982 and resulted in the end of ranger-naturalist tours at Crystal Cave and the transfer of that interpretive feature to the Sequoia Natural History Association. Continued loss of funding capacity has since reduced the summer interpretive program substantially. The size of the permanent staff has remained relatively stable, but the number of seasonal ranger-naturalists has been cut by about 40%.

Running contrary to the history of reduced staffing capacity has been continued growth in interpretive facilities. Since 1980, two major interpretive facilities have been added to the program – the Foothills Visitor Center and the Giant Forest Museum.

Mission 66 constructed a new headquarters building at Ash Mountain, but the design of that structure did not provide for a visitor information function. The building contained a small public lobby, but initially it was staffed by the Chief Ranger's secretary. When the demand for public information at this site overwhelmed this arrangement, staffing of this room shifted to the Division of Interpretation. Public use of the facility continued to grow, and by the late 1980s the public had made it clear that a full service visitor was needed at the south entrance to Sequoia National Park. In the early 1990s, using funds donated by the Sequoia Natural History Association, a structural addition to the headquarters building was constructed that provided room for what became the Foothills Visitor Center. The facility was completed in 1996, when natural history exhibit were installed.

The history of the current Giant Forest Museum in some ways begins with the closing of the earlier facility of the same name in 1964. For many years this building had served as the primary visitor contact site in Sequoia National Park. When the Lodgepole Visitor Center opened in 1964, the original Giant Forest Museum was closed and razed.

In 1980, the NPS approved a long-term plan to remove commercial facilities from the Giant Forest and restore the grove to a more natural condition. The plan also called for a significant new interpretive presence in the area and identified the historic Giant Forest Market building for this purpose. A decade of planning for this shift began in the middle 1980s and led eventually to the development of the current Giant Forest Museum and adjoining interpretive plaza. This new facility opened in December, 2001.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES:

In its eighty years of operations, the education programs at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks have developed a substantial list of physical facilities dedicated to the education of park visitors.

Visitor Centers and Related Facilities

Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) Visitor Center: This full-service visitor center was constructed during Mission 66. The information lobby was redesigned with new furnishings in the late 1990s; new exhibitry is being installed in 2006 using funding generated by park entrance and camping fees. When the rehabilitation is complete, the facility will contain a children's discovery room designed to serve visiting school groups. The new exhibits are bi-lingual with the second language being Spanish. This is the first time this has been tried at SEKI. The facility is being renamed the "Kings Canyon Visitor Center" to emphasize that it now focuses on the park as a whole rather than just the Grant Grove area.

Lodgepole Visitor Center: Also constructed during Mission 66, this facility has exhibits dating from 1978 and lobby furnishings from 1989. This visitor center contains the two parks' only major auditorium, which seats approximately 100 persons. (

Foothills Visitor Center: Occupying an addition to the Ash Mountain headquarters building constructed in 1992, this is a relatively small facility. The exhibits date from 1996.

Giant Forest Museum: A visitor center in everything but name, this facility contains extensive exhibits as well as an information desk. It adjoins a major outdoor plaza with extensive wayside exhibitry.

Cedar Grove Visitor Center: Housed in an historic log cabin ranger station erected in 1931, this facility provides visitors with an information desk and book sales area. There are no permanent exhibits although a small wayside complex is located nearby.

Walter Fry Nature Center: This facility occupies an old concessions market building in Lodgepole Campground. The building was originally erected about 1935 and enlarged significantly in 1969. It was converted to an informal nature center in 1985 with locally developed interactive exhibits. The facility was not operated in 2005.

Beetle Rock Education Center: Erected by the park concessioner in 1940, this structure originally served as the recreation hall for the Camp Kaweah

housekeeping cabin complex. During the Giant Forest restoration project, the decision was made to save and rehabilitate the structure and convert it to an education center to be operated by SNHA. During the summer of 2005, an experimental family nature program was housed at Beetle Rock. This experiment will be repeated during the summer of 2006. The facility is managed by the Sequoia Field Institute branch of SNHA.

Amphitheaters

Cedar Grove Amphitheater: Located adjacent to the Cedar Grove Visitor Center, this simple facility seats about 150 persons and has a projection booth.

Sunset (Grant Grove) Amphitheater: This large amphitheater, which seats up to 400 persons, is in Sunset Campground, which is across Highway 180 from the Grant Grove Visitor Center. Rear projection is provided from within the screen structure.

Dorst Creek Amphitheater: Located towards the west end of this spacious campground, this facility seats about 200 persons and has a rear projection AV system.

Wuksachi Lodge Amphitheater: A temporary facility, this amphitheater consists of simple wooden benches and a small fire pit. There is no AV capacity. A permanent amphitheater for Wuksachi has been designed but never funded.

Lodgepole Amphitheater: Occupying a site that has been in use for this purpose since the 1930s, the Lodgepole Amphitheater currently is in poor condition. In its current layout, it seats about 150 persons and has a projection booth. The facility is slated for rehabilitation by park maintenance in 2006.

Potwisha Amphitheater: A small amphitheater without AV capacity, this facility seats about 50 persons.

Mineral King Amphitheater: Yet another simple facility without AV capacity, this small amphitheater is located adjacent to the Mineral King Ranger Station.

Self-Guiding Trails

Zumwalt Meadow Nature Trail: This one-mile-long loop is located about four miles east of the Cedar Grove Visitor Center in the heart of the Kings Canyon. An SNHA brochure is available onsite.

Grant Tree Trail: This one-half-mile loop offers both an SNHA brochure and wayside exhibits. Funding is in hand for new waysides, and when they are installed the brochure will be phased out.

Sherman Tree Trail Complex: These new routes provide access to the Sherman Tree from both the new parking area located north of the tree and the new accessibility parking area being constructed to the west. Wayside exhibits are located through the area. The portion of the trail that connects the new west parking area with the tree meets accessibility standards.

Big Trees Trail: Opened in 2002, this one-mile-long loop begins and ends for the able-bodied at the Giant Forest Museum. Wayside exhibits tell the story. Accessible parking for the Big Trees Trail is located ¼ mile east of the Giant Forest Museum. From this parking area the portion of the trail that has waysides is completely accessible.

Other Trails: In addition to the self-guiding trails listed above, Sequoia and Kings Canyon have a number of other trails that at some time have been managed as self-guiding visitor experiences. Several are worthy of note:

Congress Trail: For many years, this two-mile loop served as the primary self-guiding trail in the Giant Forest area. Interpretation was provided through a brochure. With the re-design of the Sherman Tree area, this loop now approaches 3 miles in length and the trail has been suspended as a self-guiding experience pending further analysis of how visitors will use the area.

Crystal Cave Trail: The half-mile trail leading down to the cave entrance from the parking lot contains a number of old waysides.

Mineral King Nature Trail: This short loop begins at the east end of Cold Spring Campground in Mineral King Valley. Several simple waysides are present, but the trail is in poor condition and hard to access since it has no trailhead parking.

RESOURCE EDUCATION STAFF:

In early FY 2006, the NPS at SEKI had 11 ONPS-funded permanent personnel dedicated to interpretation and education:

- Chief of Interpretation (GS-13)
 - Office Automation Assistant (GS-6)
 - Sequoia-South District Interpreter (GS-11)
 - Foothills Area Interpreter (GS-9)
 - Sequoia-North District Interpreter (GS-11)
 - Giant Forest Area Interpreter (GS-9)
 - Kings Canyon District Interpreter (GS-11)
 - Grant Grove Area Interpreter (GS-9)

Education Coordinator (GS-9)
Exhibit Specialist (GS-11)
Public Information Officer (GS-11)

In addition, funding from fire management supported the GS-11 Fire Education Specialist position.

Each of these permanent positions has specific responsibilities:

CHIEF OF INTERPRETATION (GS-13): Provides overall guidance and supervision to the resource education program; also represents the program to park management.

OFFICE AUTOMATION ASSISTANT GS-6) Serves as the administrative system specialist for the program, responsible for reporting time and attendance, helping track the division budget, manages procurement and personnel systems, and so forth.

DISTRICT INTERPRETERS (GS-11): These three positions provide direct, daily management and supervision to the field interpretation program.

AREA INTERPRETERS (GS-9): These three positions serve as assistants to the district interpreters, directly oversee visitor center operations, and provide training and guidance to seasonal ranger-naturalists.

INTERPRETIVE SPECIALIST: Manages the parks' interpretive media program including outdoor wayside exhibits, visitor center exhibits, free publications, and the parks' website.

EDUCATION COORDINATOR: Oversees and provides standards-based educational programming to school groups visiting the parks.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER: Manages the relationship between the parks and the news and entertainment media; also serves as park lead for (non-academic) community outreach activities.

FIRE EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST: Work with both the news and entertainment media and educational organizations to build understanding of and support for the parks' fire management program.

During the summer of 2005, at peak season, the National Park Service also employed 24 seasonal ranger-naturalists to provide interpretive services to visitors. All of these positions worked essentially full-time. These positions were distributed as follows:

Cedar Grove:
1 GS-7 (area lead)

- 2 GS-5
- Grant Grove:
 - 5 GS-5
- Giant Forest/Lodgepole:
 - 1 GS-7 (cave coordination)
 - 10 GS-5
- Foothills:
 - 4 GS-5
- Mineral King:
 - 1 GS-7 (area lead)

Funding for these positions was as follows:

- 21 ONPS
- 1 Donation from Delaware North Companies Parks and Resorts
- 2 NPS Interpretation Donation Fund (visitor center boxes)

GS-5 seasonal ranger-naturalist positions represent the parks' primary visitor services staff during the busier half of the year. These positions operate visitor centers, present interpretive programs, and represent the parks at selected site while on roving or assigned station duty.

GS-7 seasonal ranger-naturalist positions either serve as supervisors of GS-5 seasonal positions and/or work in locations where direct daily supervision is not available.

Supplementing the NPS effort at the Grant Grove Visitor Center in FY 2005 was a USDA – Forest Service staff consisting of three persons and providing 7 days labor per week. This staff was provided by the Forest Service in order to help the Grant Grove Visitor Center answer visitor questions about the neighboring Giant Sequoia National Monument.

Finally, two additional positions focused on project management. One, a term position working four days a week, managed the FLREA-funded orientation wayside project, while the other, also FLREA-funded, was a seasonal position focusing on AV improvements.

Working closely with NPS staff was an SNHA field staff of approximately equal size. These positions were allocated as follows at peak-season:

- Grant Grove:
 - 1 Bookstore manager
 - 2 Sales clerks (part-time)
- Giant Forest/Lodgepole:
 - 1 Bookstore manager
 - 7 Sales and cave ticket clerks (full-time)
 - 1 Sales and cave ticket clerk (part-time)

Foothills:

- 1 Bookstore manager
- 3 Sales and cave ticket clerks (full-time)
- 1 Sales and cave ticket clerk (part-time)

Crystal Cave:

- 1 Cave manager
- 1 Assistant cave manager
- 7 Cave naturalists

SNHA also has a headquarters staff consisting of an additional 7 full-time positions. These employees included the Association's Executive Director, its program leads for finance, sales, and field operations, and a number of support positions.

Supporting all the above were a number of part-time and full-time volunteers including two from the Student Conservation Association.

SEKI describes the combined NPS, SNHA, and volunteer staff as the "SEKI Interpretive Team." All parts are necessary to sustain current levels of service.

PERSONAL SERVICES PROGRAMMING:

In the language of the NPS, "personal services" interpretation or education occurs when a person talks directly about a park-related subject to park visitors or other audiences

The SEKI Interpretive Team uses its staff to present many types of personal services interpretation. The following summarizes the FY05 program, which differs only in minor details from the program pursued in other recent years.

This description is organized around the service's basic interpretive functions as defined in *NPS Management Policies*:

- Information and Orientation
- Interpretive Programs
- Standards-Based Education

Information and Orientation

Visitor centers form the heart of the SEKI visitor orientation program. Each park visitor center contains an information desk, and it is at these desks that park rangers, SNHA personnel, and others answer visitor questions.

During FY05, three visitor centers operated daily throughout the year. These were located at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. The Lodgepole Visitor Center was closed from early November until early April. Cedar Grove was open daily from late June until Labor Day and provided limited weekend service for several weeks before and after this

period. Hours varied locally, ranging from 7 to 10 hours daily depending upon local use patterns and time of the year.

During the course of the year over 800,000 persons visited these facilities.

Interpretive Programs

Interpretive activities, generally defined as walks, talks, roving, and evening programs, are presented in these parks by both NPS and SNHA staff.

The **NPS program** is best described as a three-level effort, with different program levels during peak season, shoulder seasons, and off-season (winter).

Peak Season: Peak season interpretive programming at Sequoia and Kings Canyon occurs annually from late June through late August. This corresponds closely with visitor cycles, which reflect the fact that the sole time that most California school calendars leave open for family vacations runs from mid-June to about August 20th.

In anticipation of this period of peak visitor demand, both NPS and SNHA seek to reach full summer employment in early June. This allows for training and program preparation prior to the initiation of peak season programming in late June.

The last week of July, 2005, represented a typical sample of peak season programming. During the seven-day period that began Sunday, July 24th, and ran through Saturday, July 30th, NPS staff (including volunteers) guided visitors on 126 separate daytime events. Most were either traditional nature walks or formal talks at a site like a visitor center plaza. These efforts were distributed across the parks in the following manner:

Daytime Walks and Talks:

Park Area	Number of Activities	Types of Activities
Cedar Grove	9	2
Grant Grove	17	3
Giant Forest	63	10
Foothills	31	6
Mineral King	6	4

The great majority of these activities attracted between 15 and 25 persons each.

Formal roving occurs when ranger-naturalists are assigned to busy areas of the parks for the purpose of making visitor contacts and protecting park features. During these assignments, rangers talks to 30-60 visitors per hour. Roving is concentrated in the more heavily used areas of the parks.

During the sample period in July, 2005, the follow interpretive roving occurred:

Roving/Assigned Stations Work:

Park Area	Number of Hours During Sample Week
Cedar Grove	N/A
Grant Grove	44
Giant Forest	90
Foothills	27
Mineral King	N/A

Evening programs are another program focus area. During the sample period, ranger-naturalists presented 23 campfire and other types of evening programs. These were distributed as follows:

Evening Programs:

Park Area	Number of Programs
Cedar Grove	3
Grant Grove	7
Giant Forest	8
Foothills	3
Mineral King	2

Average attendance varied by location and night of the week, but attendance most nights fell between 75 and 125 persons at the major amphitheaters at places like Cedar Grove, Grant Grove, and Lodgepole. Audiences generally fell in the 20-30 persons range at the smaller sites such as Potwisha and Mineral King.

Shoulder Seasons: At Sequoia and Kings Canyon, the shoulder seasons generally are defined as running from April 1st through mid-June and again from Labor Day through the end of October. During these times of the year, weather conditions are generally good for tourism, but use levels are significantly less than when schools are in summer vacation mode.

During both spring and fall shoulder seasons, limited interpretive walks and talks are presented at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. Most daytime events are on weekends or holidays. Generally most areas see no more than 1-2 daytime activities daily, and most of these are shorter talks or walks at popular features. Evening programs are usually presented 1-2 nights per week at Grant Grove and Giant Forest. Roving at this time of the year is incidental.

During the shoulder seasons interpretive activities are not presented at Cedar Grove or Mineral King.

Off-Season (winter): Winter changes everything in the sequoia groves at Grant Grove and Giant Forest. These areas remain open to visitors year-round, but most years snow falls regularly from November through March. By New Year's, the snow has often reached sufficient depth to require the use of snowshoes to explore the forest. During the

deep snow period, ranger-guided snowshoe walks are given most weekends at both sites. Indoor evening programs also occur, mostly on Saturday nights. Roving is incidental only.

The **SNHA Program** of interpretive activities is focused mostly on Crystal Cave. The cave usually opens in the second week of May and runs through the end of October. During that period, fee-based cave tours are offered daily. Schedule frequency runs from 4 times per day in the shoulder season to ten per day during peak season. Tour size is limited to 50 persons and reservations are required. Tickets must be purchased at either the Lodgepole or Foothills visitor centers. In recent years, approximately 50,000 persons annually have enjoyed these hour-long tours. The cave is closed the remainder of the year.

SNHA also operates a seminar program. Seminars are fee-based, one or multi-day events that provide in-depth information about the parks. During the 2005 season, SNHA offered 20 seminars with a total attendance of about 500 persons.

Standards-Based Education

During 2005, the **NPS standards-based educational program** at Sequoia and Kings Canyon was limited to in-park programming. Weather and school calendars had the usual effect of focusing school visits to the parks to fall and especially spring. Standards-based programs were offered at Grant Grove and Foothills. The programs at Grant Grove were by far the most heavily patronized:

NPS Standards-Based Education Programs -- 2005:

Park Area	Number of Programs Presented	Number of Students Served
Grant Grove	70	1,924
Foothills	16	428

The NPS did not have an outreach education program during 2005 and has never carried out more than experimental programming in this important area.

SNHA also carried out a **standards-based program**, an outreach program designed to take a message about the caves of the parks to schools. During the winter of 2004-2005, SNHA staff visited 78 classrooms with their hour-long program and shared information with 2,326 students.

INTERPRETIVE MEDIA:

Sequoia and Kings Canyon employ a variety of interpretive media to communicate with park visitors. The most important are:

- Park Brochure

- Park Newspaper
- Community Newsletters
- Parks website
- Visitor Center exhibits
- Wayside exhibits
- Site bulletins
- Travelers Information System radio
- SNHA Publications Program

Park Brochure

Like almost all NPS units, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, in cooperation with Harpers Ferry Center, maintain a full-color brochure which is distributed to all park visitors at the entrance stations. The “park brochure,” as it is called by the staff, contains a useful road map of the parks together with an illustrated explanation of the significance of the parks. This latter statement focuses primarily upon the giant sequoias and the Sierra Nevada. Approximately 300,000 brochures are distributed annually. The brochure is also for sale at parks visitor centers. Funding for the brochure comes from national sources and is not borne by the parks.

Park Newspaper

The park newspaper, formally known as the *Guide*, but also remembered fondly as the *Sequoia Bark* by many park employees, is published four times annually to coincide with the seasons. (Minor changes in seasonal editions are sometimes made if an issue is reprinted during its period of use.) The current 12-page format includes everything from what to see and do, to commercial facilities hours. A 4-page inset describes SNHA programs. Funding for publication comes from SNHA, but editorial content and layout of the 12-page section are the responsibility of the NPS. The *Guide* is distributed free of charge at park entrance stations and visitor centers. It is also distributed, upon request, to other venues seeking information about the parks and serves as the primary mail-out item in response to telephone requests for printed information. In facsimile form, it can also be found on the park website. About 300,000 newspapers are distributed annually.

Community Newsletters

Each year, the Public Affairs office issues four community newsletters. Two of these focus on general park news and management while the other two focus primarily on fire management. Approximately 5,000 of these are mailed to all addresses in several communities bordering the two parks.

Parks' Website

The parks' website is a powerful information outlet that is growing rapidly in significance. The SEKI site is a part of www.nps.gov, the agency-wide site that is one of the most visited in the nation. The SEKI site is organized on several levels. Persons

seeking basic pre-visit orientation will find that material easy to access, but those with more technical needs will also find much here including park planning documents and NEPA compliance materials. As a part of a Service-wide effort, the site is being redesigned during the winter of 2005-2006.

Wayside exhibits

Wayside exhibits offer a cost-effective way to place park information in a variety of physical settings. In general, SEKI waysides fall into one of two categories – orientation exhibits and subject matter exhibits.

As this is being written, SEKI is in the midst of a major wayside enhancement effort. FLREA funding has been made available both to develop a parks-wide system of orientation waysides and to replace and/or otherwise upgrade subject matter panels across the parks. This work, which is costing over \$400,000, will go on for several years before it is complete and should revolutionize the quality of SEKI's waysides. The project manager in the parks' interpretive media office is working almost entirely on this project.

Site Bulletins

Reflecting the evolving nature of electronic information systems and the increased cost of traditional printing, SEKI has established the goal in recent years of reducing the number and distribution of site bulletins. In most cases, the information traditionally contained within these simple handouts can be placed on the parks' webpage and made available through that medium. There is still a demand for such handouts, however, and it may be some years, if ever, before this program is completely extinguished.

Travelers Information System Radio

Low-wattage radio is a useful way of communicating short, time-sensitive messages to persons traveling in private vehicles. Such a system already exists for the Ash Mountain entrance, and, in cooperation with the Forest Service, another system is being installed at Squaw Valley along the State Route 180 corridor leading to Big Stump. The need for a third system has been identified at Giant Forest.

SNHA Publications Program

For many years, the Sequoia Natural History Association has published materials specifically about Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. This material is sold in parks' visitor centers and occasionally outside the parks as well. The current SNHA publications list included the following items as of June, 2005. In each case, the title is followed by a date when the existing supply will be exhausted; further comments about the future of the publication may follow.

A Place for Wonder; 2011

Beneath the Giants; End of '06; Reprint 2008

Challenge of the Big Trees (hard cover); Late '05; Discontinue

Challenge of the Big Trees(soft cover): End of '06; Produce new edition.
Col. Young and Buffalo Soldiers; 2010
Crystal Cave Boo; End of '05; Will go out of print, and be replaced with smaller book of tour.
Crystal Cave Color and Learn; End of '05; Produced in-house as needed.
Did You Know; End of '08; Replace with a coloring book
Discovering Sierra... book series (3 books) Published with Yosemite Association; as needed.
From Pioneers to Preservationists; End of '09; 2010
General Grant Grove Trail; 2006; Goes out of print in 2007 per NPS request.
General Sherman Tree; End of 2010
Giant Sequoias; End of 2013
Handbook of Trail Building; End of 2010; Will go out of print
Indians of SEKI; Late '05; Will go out of print.
Junior Ranger program booklets; New booklet being produced for 2006
Kaweah Remembered; 2020
Manmade Bear; Summer 2005; Slow seller - won't reprint
Mather Mt. Party; Mid '06 Slow seller, but should reprint for its interpretive value
Rae Lakes Loop Map; 2006; 2006
Sequoia & Kings Canyon Discovery; End of '04; Do not reprint. Replace with coloring book.
Ski Trails of Grant Grove; End of '05; Produced in-house as needed.
Ski Trails of Sequoia; Winter 06/07 Reprint as needed - "on demand" reprint
Story of Devils Postpile; End of '07 Profitable - Reprint planned for 2008
To Find the Biggest Tree; End of '09; Author passed away probably won't re-print
Trails of Cedar Grove; 2008; Reprint as needed
Trails of GG and vicinity; 2011
Trails of Giant Forest; Mid '05; 2006
Trails of Grant Grove; End of 2010; Reprint as needed
Trails of LP/Wolverton; End of '09; Reprint as needed
Trails of Mineral King; End of '09; Reprint as needed
Wildflowers of SEKI; End of '07; Reprint 2008
Zumwalt Meadow Guide; 2010

STATISTICAL TABLES

The following tables document the accomplishments of the field interpretive program for the years 2000 through 2005. Covering six years, they provide a baseline for assessing the effectiveness of the program in recent years.

TABLE ONE – VISITOR CENTER/MUSEUM ATTENDANCE (AND DAYS OPEN)

	<i>Grant Grove VC</i>	<i>Cedar Grove VC</i>	<i>Lodgepole VC</i>	<i>Giant Forest Museum</i>	<i>Foothills VC</i>	<i>Totals</i>
2000	181,863 (365)	Closed	229,195 (297)	Under construction	171,134 (365)	582,192 (1027)
2001	181,085 (365)	13,909 (98)	239,797 (350)	Under construction	182,005 (365)	616,769 (1,196)
2002	207,401 (365)	11,701 (100)	197,992 (302)	150,893 (292)	179,635 (365)	747,622 (1,424)
2003	190,498 (365)	8,840 (80)	193,008 (259)	229,531 (365)	190,995 (365)	812,872 (1,434)
2004	197,977 (365)	8,668 (88)	184,070 (266)	206,047 (365)	187,774 (365)	784,536 (1,449)
2005	194,443 (364)	9,849 (90)	155,790 (184)	240,170 (365)	189,592 (365)	789,844 (1,368)

TABLE TWO – ATTENDANCE AT EVENING PROGRAMS (AND NUMBER OF EVENTS)

<i>Evening Programs -- 2004</i>	<i>Grant Grove Area</i>	<i>Cedar Grove Area</i>	<i>Lodgepole & Giant Forest Areas</i>	<i>Foothills</i>	<i>Mineral King</i>	<i>Totals</i>
2000	8,655 (87)	6,572 (62)	15,458 (218)	602 (15)	1046 (36)	32,333 (418)
2001	8,259 (106)	7155 (61)	15,272 (160)	1,099 (28)	1050 (40)	32,835 (395)
2002	8,311 (98)	4,908 (57)	13,531 (141)	1,249 (37)	785 (40)	28,784 (373)
2003	6,738 (68)	4,822 (41)	10,247 (115)	1,675 (70)	518 (25)	24,000 (319)
2004	7,378 (87)	4,121 (36)	13,531 (194)	1,873 (66)	834 (36)	27,737 (419)
2005	7,999 (84)	2,785 (33)	11,493 (106)	2,443 (67)	715 (33)	25,435 (323)

TABLE THREE – ATTENDANCE AT GUIDED WALKS (AND NUMBER OF EVENTS)

<i>Ranger-guided Walks and Talks</i>	<i>Grant Grove Area</i>	<i>Cedar Grove Area</i>	<i>Lodgepole & Giant Forest Areas</i>	<i>Foothills</i>	<i>Mineral King</i>	<i>Totals</i>
2000	4,894 (202)	1,914 (125)	11,936 (612)	768 (38)	303 (58)	19,815 (1035)
2001	9,371 (269)	2,538 (118)	24,443 (762)	929 (46)	265 (55)	37,546 (1,250)
2002	11,610 (214)	1,411 (111)	9,968 (569)	1009 (65)	314 (49)	24,312 (1,008)
2003	5,157 (229)	1,173 (83)	9,923 (524)	3,667 (390)	316 (50)	20,236 (1,276)
2004	4,081 (168)	1,718 (73)	12,278 (586)	5,028 (366)	378 (47)	23,483 (1,240)
2005	4,307 (220)	707 (79)	17,902 (735)	7,223 (581)	485 (52)	30,624 (1,667)

TABLE FOUR – CONTACTS MADE ROVING (AND NUMBER OF HOURS INVESTED)

<i>Roving Contacts</i>	<i>Grant Grove Area</i>	<i>Cedar Grove Area</i>	<i>Lodgepole & Giant Forest Areas</i>	<i>Foothills</i>	<i>Mineral King</i>	<i>Totals</i>
2000	11,586 (235)	7,182 (193)	36,810 (700)	5,115 (517, including MK)	1,417	62,110 (1,645)
2001	16,979 (361)	4,551 (115)	41,934 (875)	7,090 (500, including MK)	2,012	72,566 (1,851)
2002	20,823 (390)	3,127 (50)	29,394 (652)	5,875 (500, including MK)	1,872	61,091 (1,592)
2003	26,316 (423)	842 (23)	21,016 (537)	6,683 (222)	1,209 (38)	56,066 (1,243)
2004	23,231 (385)	1,982 (m)	31,961 (603)	11,500 (322)	1,485 (55)	70,159 (1,365+)
2005	31,786 (486)	2,686 (m)	27,210 (446)	12,930 (442)	1,260 (59)	75,872 (1,433+)

TABLE FIVE – TOTAL NPS INTERPRETIVE CONTACTS OF THE FIELD PROGRAM

	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
<i>Visitor Center Contacts</i>	789,844 (1,368)	784,536 persons	812,872 persons	747,622 persons	616,796 persons	582,192 persons
<i>Evening Programs</i>	25,435 (323 programs)	27,737 (419 programs)	24,000 (319 programs)	28,784 (373 programs)	32,835 (395 programs)	32,333 (418 programs)
<i>Guided Walks</i>	30,624 (1,667 events)	23,483 (1,240 events)	20,236 (1,276 events)	24,312 (1,008 events)	37,546 (1,250 events)	19,815 (1035)
<i>Roving Contacts</i>	75,872 (1,433+ hours)	70,159 (1,365+) hours	56,066 (1,243 hours)	61,091 (1,592 hours)	72,566 (1,851 hours)	62,110 (1,645)
<i>Total Contacts</i>	921,775 Visitor Contacts	905,915 Visitor Contacts	913,174 Visitor Contacts	861,809 Visitor Contacts	759,743 Visitor Contacts	696,450 Visitor Contacts

TABLE SIX – PEAK SEASON INTERPRETIVE STAFFING

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
NPS @ Cedar	1	2	3	3	3	3
Other @ Cedar	2 SNHA @ Roads End	1 SCA 1 VIP	1 SCA	1 SCA 2VIP (p-t)	1 SCA	1 SCA 2 VIP (p-t)
NPS @ Grant	5	6	6	4	5	5
SNHA @ Grant	2	2	2	3	3	3
Other @ Grant	1.4 USFS	1.4 USFS	1.4 USFS	1.4 USFS 1 SCA (p-t)	1.4 USFS 1 SCA (p-t)	1.4 USFS 1 SCA (p-t)
NPS @ LP/GF	11	14	14	10	11	11
SNHA @ LP/GF	4	5	8	8	7.5	7
Other @ LP/GF	4 VIP (p-t)	1 SCA 1 VIP	0	1 VIP	1 SCA	2 SCA
NPS @ Foothills	3	3	4	3	4 2 (p-t)	4
SNHA @ Foothills	2.8	2 2 (p-t)	2 2 (p-t)	2 2 (p-t)	4.5	4.5
Other @ Foothills	4 VIP (p-t)	3 VIP (p-t)	3 VIP (p-t)	6 VIP (p-t)	3 VIP (p-t)	Multiple VIPs (p-t)
NPS @ Mineral K.	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other @ Mineral K.	0	0	“Several” VIPs (p-t)	0	9 VIP (p-t)	Multiple VIPs (p-t)
Total NPS	21	26	28	21	24 2 (p-t)	24
Total SNHA	10.8	9 2 (p-t)	12 2 (p-t)	13 2 (p-t)	15	14.5

TABLE SEVEN: USE OF TIME BY PERCENTAGE DURING WEEK OF JULY 24-31, 2005

The week in question was selected as representative of peak-season park staffing. This table demonstrates where time actually went. The same raw material is used again in Table Eight, but with actual hours shown rather than percentage of hours.

	Cedar Grove	Grant Grove	GF/LP	Foothills	Mineral King
Total work hours available*	168 hours	460 hours	980 hours	423 hours	40 hours
% of hours used in VC	38.6%	43.9%	41.4%	39.7%	N/A
% of hours used for Walks and Talks	16.0% 9 events	08.0% 17 events	07.1% 63 events	16.7% 31 events	18.25% 6 events
% of hours used for Evening Program	06.2% 3 programs	03.0% 7 programs	01.8% 8 programs	<01.0% 3 programs	05.0% 2 programs
% of hours used for roving	N/A	09.5%	09.1%	06.0%	N/A
% of time used for "other"***	39.2%	35.6%	40.6%	37.6%	76.75%

* Includes NPS, SNHA, SCVA, VIP, and USFS labor; also includes time of first and second level NPS interpretive supervisors.

** "Other" includes supervision, management, training, program preparation, sick and annual leave, etc.

TABLE EIGHT: USE OF TIME BY HOURS DURING WEEK OF JULY 24-31, 2005

	Cedar Grove	Grant Grove	GF/LP	Foothills	Mineral King	Totals
Total work hours available*	168 hours	460 hours	980hours	423 hours	40 hours	2071 hours
Hours used in VC	65 hours	202 hours	406 hours	168 hours	N/A	841 hours
Hours used for Walks and Talks	27 hours	36 hours	70 hours	70 hours	6 hours	209 hours
	9 events	17 events	63 events	31 events	6 events	126 events
Hours used for Evening Program	10 hours	14 hours	18 hours	3 hours	2 hours	47 hours
	3 programs	7 programs	8 programs	3 programs	2 programs	23 programs
Hours used for roving	N/A	44 hours	88 hours	24 hours	N/A	156 hours
Hours used for “other” **	66 hours	164 hours	398 hours	158 hours	32 hours	818 hours

* Includes NPS, SNHA, SCVA, VIP, and USFS labor; also includes time of first and second level NPS interpretive supervisors.

** “Other” includes supervision, management, training, program preparation, sick and annual leave, etc.

TABLE NINE – STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION PROGRAMS* *

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	919	1,586	1,365	1,725	1,625	1,502	2,402

*Total number of students attending activities conducted within the parks.

TABLE TEN – CRYSTAL CAVE ATTENDANCE (SNHA)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
May	3,585	3,659	3,749	5,148	4,604	5,441	3,908
June	7,325	7,742	8,587	10,118	9,454	9,208	8,225
July	14,761	14,281	15,735	16,481	16,348	15,893	15,355
August	16,199	14,639	18,561	16,835	19,347	16,040	13,953
September	5,907	5450	6,256	6,192	5,438	6,666	5,833
October	0	0	0	2,554	2,877	2,375	2,600
November	0	0	0	273	83	0	0
Total:	47,777	44,226	52,888	57,601	58,151	55,623	49,874

ROLE OF PARTNERS AND COOPERATORS

Partners and cooperators play a significant role in the resources education program at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park. Without partnerships and the parks' many cooperators, the resource education program would accomplish significantly less each year.

SEQUOIA NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Established in 1940 specifically to support educational programming at Sequoia and Kings Canyon, the Sequoia Natural History Association (SNHA) has become over time an essential part of the parks' resource education program. Today the Association fills many important roles. These include:

Sales of Educational Merchandise: SNHA operates educational merchandise outlets in all the parks' visitor centers as well as a mail order service. Major bookstores function in the visitor centers at Grant Grove, Lodgepole, and Foothills, as well as in the Giant Forest Museum. Smaller, secondary outlets are present at the Cedar Grove Visitor Center, Crystal Cave, and the Mineral King Ranger Station. Of these facilities, all are staffed by SNHA sales clerks except for Cedar Grove and Mineral King. Park rangers also help make sales at all locations.

These outlets have two major purposes. The first is that the merchandise serves as a critical educational resource to visitors. Visitors seeking trail maps, bird books, flower guides, park histories, and much, much more, know that SNHA outlets are the best source of SEKI material. SNHA's sales program also is profitable, and the net revenue from this program is what supports the other many good things SNHA does for the resource education program.

Park-Specific Publications for Sale: SNHA is the primary publisher of park-specific materials. For details, including a full list of SNHA publications, see "Interpretive Media."

Free Publications: SNHA provides funds for the publication of four editions of the park newspaper each year. For details, see "Interpretive Media."

Visitor Center Support: SNHA provides (as of 2005) approximately 50% of the labor used to staff the parks' information desks in the visitor centers and related facilities. This is a major function that provides very substantial value to the parks, since the parks' ONPS-funded interpretive staff is not sufficient to staff these facilities completely and conduct a significant interpretive program. A listing of SNHA positions supporting visitor center operations can be found in "Resource Education Staff."

Crystal Cave Tours: Since 1982, SNHA has managed and staffed the interpretive tour program at Crystal Cave. All visitors who tour the cave do so on guided tours, and the guided tour program is an SNHA function. To support this function, SNHA has a seasonal staff of up to nine persons directly assigned to the cave plus ticket sales clerks at both Lodgepole and Foothills visitor centers. In recent years an average of about 50,000 persons have toured Crystal Cave each year during the May-through-October cave season. The cave is a substantial source of SNHA revenue, second in significance only to visitor center sales.

Seminar Program: Since 1983, SNHA has operated a fee-based seminar program that brings together small groups of interested individuals with highly qualified instructors to explore parks-related subjects. Over the years many different types of activities have been offered ranging from single-day seminars on subjects like bears to multi-day wilderness adventures. These programs are presented under the Sequoia Field Institute brand name.

Beetle Rock Education Center: Associated with the Sequoia Field Institute is the Beetle Rock Education Center, an assembly hall and classroom located in Giant Forest near the Giant Forest Museum. This facility is managed by SNHA and available for both NPS and SNHA educational uses.

Direct Donations: Direct donation of cash aid to the National Park Service by SNHA is a minor function. In recent years less than 1% of SNHA gross revenue has gone to direct cash aid. These small sums are used mostly for minor purchases in support of the parks' educational and cultural resources programs.

In summary, it is hard to imagine the parks' educational program without SNHA. As the parks' designated cooperating association, SNHA provides half of the staff that operates the parks' visitor centers and, at Crystal Cave, SNHA provides half the guided walks and talks that occur in the parks. SNHA staff participate in the parks Interpretive Management Team, and the Chief Park Interpreter serves as an advisor to the SNHA board of directors and attends its meetings.

SEQUOIA FUND

Created by SNHA in 1985, the purpose of the Sequoia Fund (formally the "Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Foundation") is to raise funds for park needs. The Fund's mission is not focused particularly upon the parks' educational programs, but in practice most of the Fund's more successful projects have had an educational component.

The largest and most successful of the Fund's efforts in support of education was its fundraising for the restoration of the building that houses Beetle Rock Education Center. This campaign raised approximately \$250,000, and the facility now in existence owes its

presence directly to this effort. The Sequoia Fund has also carried out a number of smaller projects in support of education including education videos and exhibit support.

As FY06 began, the Sequoia Fund committed to initiating a major new fundraising project for the parks that will have major resource education value. The proposal is to raise several hundred thousand dollars to support a “Ranger in the Classroom” project in the Central Valley.

STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

For more than twenty years, the Student Conservation Association (SCA) has supported the SEKI by recruiting student interns to work in the parks as conservation assistants. These volunteers, who receive a small stipend from SCA, have been used to staff visitor centers, present interpretive activities to park visitors, and carry out special projects. Funding for this program comes from SCA, park programs, and SNHA. In recent years 2-4 SCA volunteers have worked each year in resource-education-related work at SEKI.

SEQUOIA FOR YOUTH

Sequoia for Youth is a unique program that brings middle school students to the parks from several schools in Los Angeles and Central California. Originally created by a teacher at Edison Middle School in South Central Los Angeles, the program today is supported by a self-organized alliance that includes local businesses and service clubs. The Save-the-Redwoods League has also supported this effort. Program participants come to the parks for several days and take part in a number of different activities.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

In recent years, Sequoia and Kings Canyon have worked on various projects with many partners depending upon the availability of grants and other funding. The list includes:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Lake Kaweah)
- College of the Sequoias
- Reedley College
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust
- Sequoia Union School
- Three Rivers School
- Three Rivers Business Association
- Tulare County Office of Education
- University of California at Merced
- Woodlake High School

VOLUNTEERS

The final level of partnership, and one of the most significant, reflects those individuals who volunteer their time to assist the parks. The NPS tracks and manages these efforts through the Volunteers in Parks (VIP) program. VIPs work on many park projects, but many support resource education functions. In recent years, SEKI has reported each year the donation of between 40,000 and 60,000 hours of time to the parks.

A major limiting factor in the SEKI VIP program is the limited amount of seasonal housing available in the parks, particularly during peak season at locations like Lodgepole and Grant Grove. With more housing, the role of VIPs in the parks could be extended significantly.

PART II – PROPOSED RESOURCE EDUCATION PROGRAM

GOALS OF THIS PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Goals help inform plans by establishing targets and desired conditions. For this plan, two sets of goals have been prepared. Each speaks to a different aspect of the resources education program. The two sets of goals are for:

- The resource education program (as a whole)
- Visitor experiences

The following definitions specify what each of these goals intends to achieve.

Resource Education Program Goals: This set of goals summarizes what the resource education program as a whole should accomplish. This is the highest level goal set.

Visitor Experience Goals: Park visitors are not the sole focus of the SEKI Resources Education program, but they remain a primary concern. Resource Education programming, most of it in the form of traditional interpretive services, can play a significant role in determining the nature of visitor experiences and, ultimately, visitor support for parks. To help design and evaluate the SEKI Resources Education program, visitor experience goals have thus been developed.

RESOURCE EDUCATION PROGRAM GOALS:

The Resource Education Program at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks will be successful if:

- Park neighbors, concerned citizen, and other interested persons are able to obtain information easily about the parks, their features and management, and why they are significant.
- Park visitors are provided with educational experiences that provide opportunities for visitors to learn those things that are necessary to enjoy their visits and appreciate the parks (See “Visitor Experience Goals” section of this plan).
- Park visitors enjoy the parks in non-consumptive ways that leave the parks unimpaired for future generations.
- Park visitors enjoy the parks safely because they understand the risks involved in exploring natural environments.

- Park visitors find the major educational features and facilities of the parks to be physically accessible and that programmatic accommodations are available broadly for those with physical, hearing, and/or vision impairments.
- All interested persons are able to obtain basic information about the unprecedented anthropogenic pressures that appear to threaten many of the parks' most desirable biological features.
- Schools and other educational organizations have ready access to information and programs that employ park-related subjects to support and strengthen standards-based education.
- The news media have ready access to accurate information about park management, current events, and long-term trends in the parks.
- Park employees are sustained as a team by providing them with accurate and insightful information about what is going on within the parks and why.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS:

The Resource Education Program at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks will be successful if:

- Potential visitors are able to access orientation and activity-planning information easily so that they may quickly and efficiently plan their itineraries, obtain necessary permits, and locate park destinations.
- Park visitors have the opportunity to interact with the natural and cultural resources of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in ways that provide safe, satisfying experiences and have minimum impacts on those resources.
- Visitors are encouraged to experience park environments in non-consumptive ways and provided information and skill-training that increased the potential enjoyment of such activities. These efforts will focus especially on exploring getting visitors out of their vehicles and onto footpaths and trails..
- Visitors have opportunities to learn about the parks' resources and their significance through a variety of interpretive experiences and media.
- Visitors have the opportunity to gain an understanding of the Sierra Nevada's ecosystems, the parks' biotic communities and their constituent elements, and the interrelatedness of such systems.
- Visitors have the opportunity to learn about and appreciate park resources that are not readily accessible or available.

- Visitors are introduced to the vulnerability of the parks' resources to human activities inside and outside park boundaries and will have the opportunity to learn about the parks' management programs and their goals.
- Visitors are provided opportunities to learn skills which will allow them to enjoy the parks in sustainable, non-consumptive ways.
- Visitors are encouraged to appreciate the National Park System and its mission and to recognize naturalness and wildness as values preserved in the parks.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES:

A key element in any communications plan is the defining of critical messages. In the National Park Service these have long taken the form of “primary interpretive themes.”

Primary interpretive themes define the over-arching messages that direct the content of the SEKI Resource Education program. Purposely general in nature, each of these themes identifies a broad subject matter area of importance to the future of these parks. It should be expected that all communication taking place as a part of the SEKI Resource Education program will have a direct tie to one or more of these themes.

- As national parks, Sequoia and Kings Canyon protect landscapes and ecosystems that offer enormous recreational, educational, scientific, and philosophical value to the 21st century.
- Because of the enormous topographic relief of the southern Sierra Nevada, the range contains a very wide range of environments, habitats, and organisms.
- Giant sequoias, which grow naturally only on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada, have evolved survival strategies that allow them to become the largest, and some of the oldest, trees in the world.
- The southern Sierra Nevada was created by, and continues to be shaped by, powerful geologic forces that have generated landscapes of great scenic interest.
- Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks protect the heart of California’s largest wilderness – a world where humans can still experience our planet as it was before humanity so modified much of it.
- The southern Sierra Nevada is being subjected to unprecedented anthropogenic pressures that threaten the survival of many of the range’s most desirable and significant features.

PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

Unlike most interpretive plans, the *Comprehensive Plan for Resource Education, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park* contains alternatives. The purpose of these alternatives is to show the different ways that the SEKI Resources Education Program could pursue its goals. It is hoped that this process of defining alternatives will help the public, agency partners, and park staff understand the choices SEKI faces as it designs its resource education program.

The alternatives outline four basic strategies for resource education at SEKI:

1. The first alternative (“A – SERVE ALL AUDIENCES”) would attempt to sustain a balanced program that serves all audiences (including park visitors, park neighbors, and educational groups) in an equitable and balanced fashion.
2. The second alternative (“B - EMPHASIZE STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION”) explores a program that places primary emphasis on the needs of standards-based education; services for park visitors are reduced or in some cases terminated.
3. The third alternative (“C - EMPHASIZE VISITOR SERVICES”) defines an approach that gives primacy to the needs of park visitors. Standards-based services are proportionally minimized or eliminated.
4. The final alternative (“D – EMPHASIZE TECHNOLOGY AND INTERPRETIVE MEDIA”) returns to serving both park visitors and standards-based clients but does so not through direct use of staff (rangers and others) but primarily through the extensive use of electronic and graphic media.

The alternatives also incorporate a second critical concept – program capacity. In this context, “capacity” is defined as the ability of the NPS and its partners to provide educational services and carry out educational programming. Within the alternatives, three levels of program capacity are defined:

1. ENHANCED: This level of service reflects one less constrained by financial constraints than the current program. It defines how the program might most usefully grow if given the opportunity.
2. BASELINE: This level reflects the FY 2005 capacity of the SEKI interpretive program. For details see the “Current Program Description” section of this plan.
3. REDUCED: This third level of service describes a program more constrained by budget than “Baseline.” It therefore outlines how program assets might most usefully be reallocated in a tighter budget situation than that enjoyed recently by the SEKI program.

In summary, there are four conceptual alternatives, and for each of these, this plan defines three program capacity levels. Conceptually, the alternatives are thus structured in this way:

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Enhanced Capacity	Enhanced Capacity	Enhanced Capacity	Enhanced Capacity
Baseline Capacity	Baseline Capacity	Baseline Capacity	Baseline Capacity
Reduced Capacity	Reduced Capacity	Reduced Capacity	Reduced Capacity

A detailed table that summarizes the content of each of these boxes can be found on the following pages.

There is no formal “no action” alternative, although the baseline level of Alternative C resembles the program presented in recent years.

Following the summary table are twelve individual worksheets for each of the alternatives at each of the capacity levels. These work sheets provide substantial detail about these proposals.

Common to all these alternatives are some basic assumptions about staffing. The biggest single consumer of staff time in the SEKI resource education program is the visitor center information desk program. At the four major visitor centers (Grant Grove, Lodgepole, Giant Forest Museum, and Foothills) it is impossible to provide adequate visitor service from May through September with only one employee on duty to answer questions and sell SNHA merchandise. A minimum of two persons is required. During the remainder of the year one person will usually suffice at any one time. Also assumed in these alternatives is that an average of between 30% and 40% of total work time is required for supervision, training, program preparation, travel to event sites, and so forth.

ALTERNATIVES SUMMARY TABLE

PROGRAM CAPACITY	ALTERNATIVE A: SERVE ALL AUDIENCES	ALTERNATIVE B: EMPHASIZE STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION	ALTERNATIVE C: EMPHASIZE VISITOR SERVICES	ALTERNATIVE D: EMPHASIZE TECHNOLOGY AND INTERPRETIVE MEDIA
ENHANCED CAPACITY	(A-E) Seek to provide program that meets all agency standards and most GMP goals; provide full spectrum of services including visitor orientation, interpretive programs, standards-based educational services and interpretive media. Enhance service levels at visitor centers; increase walks and talks and roving. Implement significant outreach education program. Improve media services. Make increased use of volunteers.	(B-E) Focus is on maximizing potential for standards-based education activities. In-park programs are enhanced, but primary emphasis area is outreach education. Education staff enlarged to support this effort. Basic visitor center operations sustained. Low level NPS programs provide limited schedules of interpretive programming during peak season and roving at a few key sites.	(C-E) Emphasize services to park visitors. Lengthen visitor center hours and increase ranger presence in those facilities. Increase ranger-led walks and talks. Increase roving at key park features. Enhance waysides and other media that serve park visitors. Enlarge services for school groups visiting parks, but discontinue outreach efforts.	(D-E) Emphasize technology and interpretive media to communicate park messages in lieu of direct personal services. Serve both park visitors and other audiences. Upgrade web-based services. Explore more intense use of TIS radio systems and other electronic media including low-wattage and/or satellite broadcast systems for outdoor use. Explore new technologies including IPOD downloading as means of providing visitor information Base standards-based educational services on web. Provide limited scale roving programs. Augment these with significantly enhanced self-guiding activities based on exhibits, brochures, or electronic media. Increase number of self-guiding trails.
BASLINE CAPACITY	(A-B) Using existing ("baseline") capacity, continue to provide balanced spectrum of services for all audiences including visitor orientation, interpretive programs, standards-based educational services and interpretive media. All services limited by capacity constraints.	(B-B) Using existing capacity, focus efforts primary on standards-based education services. Enhance in-park educational services; create new outreach program. Provide standards-based services both within parks and to schools in surrounding region. Reduce visitor orientation services, especially at Lodgepole and Cedar Grove; discontinue NPS-funded interpretive programming.	(C-B) Using existing capacity, focus efforts primarily on park visitors. Sustain visitor orientation services and interpretive media; enhance interpretive programming; reduce and/or eliminate standards-based education services.	(D-B) Emphasize technology and interpretive media to communicate park messages. Reduce number of seasonal positions and shift funds to media program. Upgrade web-based services. Explore more intense use of TIS radio systems and other electronic media. Focus standards-based educational services on web. Limit NPS staff to visitor orientation function at visitor centers. Replace ranger-guided interpretive activities with self-guiding activities based on exhibits, brochures, or electronic media. Increase number of self-guiding trails.

REDUCED CAPACITY	(A-R) Using reduced capacity, continue to provide balanced spectrum of services including visitor orientation, interpretive programs, standards-based educational services and interpretive media. All services severely limited by capacity constraints. Several visitor centers closed or turned over the partners. All remaining walks and talks presented by SNHA. Staff time available for media management and education coordination reduced.	(B-R) Using reduced capacity, focus efforts primarily on standards-based outreach services. Shift emphasis away from visitor-oriented portions of visitor orientation, interpretive program and interpretive media functions. All services severely limited by capacity constraints.	(C-R) Focus limited interpretive program on busiest areas of parks. Sustain programs there to maximum degree possible by reducing visitor orientation, roving, and interpretive media. No standards-based educational services provided.	(D-R) Emphasize technology and interpretive media to communicate park messages. Explore more intense use of TIS radio systems and other electronic media. Focus standards-based educational services on web. Limit NPS staff to visitor orientation function at visitor centers. Replace ranger-guided interpretive activities with self-guiding activities based on exhibits or brochures. Increase number of self-guiding trails. Reduce overall program by ceasing seasonal services utilizing ranger-naturalists.

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEETS

ALTERNATIVE: SERVE ALL AUDIENCES
CAPACITY LEVEL: BASELINE
ALTERNATIVE CODE: A-B

DESCRIPTION: Using existing (“baseline”) capacity, continue to provide balanced spectrum of services for all audiences including visitor orientation, interpretive programs, standards-based educational services and interpretive media. All services limited by capacity constraints.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC, Giant Forest Museum, and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Lodgepole VC daily April through October. Operate Cedar Grove VC daily mid-June through Labor Day.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 40/60% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KVCV if funded by that agency.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>Daily NPS interpretive programming at Cedar Grove, Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills during peak season. Reduced programming in same areas during shoulder seasons. Less-than-daily summer programming at Mineral King.</p> <p>Operate peak-season nature center in Giant Forest/Lodgepole area and provide activities for families with children. Staff primarily with volunteers or partners. Hours and days of operation limited by availability of non-NPS staffing.</p> <p>During off-season, limited NPS programming on selected weekends and holidays at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>Using primarily transportation fee funding, provide shuttle bus guides and/or shuttle bus-stop roving services to support the Giant Forest shuttle system.</p> <p>Roving/assigned station NPS programming daily during peak season at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. Major emphasis sites are Grant Tree, Sherman Tree, and selected picnic and river sites in Hospital Rock / Ash Mountain corridor. Reduced programming at same sites in shoulder season.</p> <p>Limited (less than daily) NPS roving program at Cedar Grove, Crystal Cave, and Mineral King.</p> <p>Off-season NPS roving at selected sites on weekends and holidays only responding to local use needs and staffing availability.</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>Attention balanced primarily between webpage management, publications (park newspaper and brochure), and exhibit projects (primarily FLREA-funded). One GS-11 PFT position (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function.</p> <p>Provide media support for Giant Forest shuttle system including both bus-stop and on-bus materials.</p> <p>Project Manager (term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	<p>One PFT position (ONPS-funded) serves as coordinator for this function. Program will focus on activities such as school groups visiting Grant Grove, teacher training, website material development for off-site use, etc.</p> <p>Continue “Sequoia for Youth” program relying primarily on non-ONPS funding to support activities. Limited ranger time may continue to be invested.</p>
Outreach Education	<p>Seek to establish new program using term employees and outside funding. Implement program only to extent possible using non-ONPS funding.</p>
Public Affairs	<p>Park responds to media inquiries but has only limited proactive PIO capacity. Community outreach activities in the form of talks to organizations, public events attendance, etc.,</p>

	<p>pursued in balance with media work.</p> <p>One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer. Fire Education Specialist position staffed if funded by FPA. Seasonal media assistant position staffed if funded by Visitor Protection Division.</p>
Volunteer Management	Collateral duty assigned to Sequoia-South Interpretive District Staff.
Division Management	<p>Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).</p> <p>Chief invests significant time in fundraising activities.</p> <p>If supported by transportation fees, establish LFT position to serve as NPS liaison and COR for Giant Forest shuttle system.</p>
Role of Partners	<p>SNHA provides <60% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers.</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the fee-based Sequoia Field Institute, which offers in-depth, park-related seminars.</p> <p>SNHA operates and staffs the Beetle Rock Education Center.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund cooperates with NPS to raise funds for outreach education.</p>

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: SERVE ALL AUDIENCES
CAPACITY LEVEL: ENHANCED
ALTERNATIVE CODE: A-E

DESCRIPTION: Seek to provide program that meets all agency standards and most GMP goals; provide full spectrum of services including visitor orientation, interpretive programs, standards-based educational services and interpretive media. Enhance service levels at visitor centers; increase walks and talks and roving. Implement significant outreach education program. Improve media services. Make increased use of volunteers.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC, Giant Forest Museum, and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Lodgepole VC daily April through October. Operate Cedar Grove VC daily mid-May through mid-September. Lengthen peak-season operating hours to 7:00 – 20:00 at GGVC, LPVC, GFMU, and FHVC. Provide longer hours at Cedar Grove VC. Increase seasonal staff as required.</p> <p>Provide staffing for a cooperative visitor centers in off-park sites.</p> <p>Restore permanent GS-9 ranger positions at Lodgepole and Cedar Grove.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 60/40% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC if funded by agency.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>Provide substantial and varied program of daily NPS interpretive programming at Cedar Grove, Grant Grove, Giant Forest, Foothills, and Mineral King during peak season. Sustain daily walks at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills during shoulder seasons. Seasonal staff enlarged as required.</p> <p>Provide ranger staff for nature center in Giant Forest/Lodgepole area and schedule activities for families with children.</p> <p>During off-season, provide NPS programming on selected weekends and holidays at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists may present fee-based interpretive seminars offering more in-depth learning opportunities.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>Roving/assigned station NPS programming daily during peak season at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. Major emphasis sites, including Grant Tree, Sherman Tree, Crystal Cave, and selected picnic and river sites in Hospital Rock / Ash Mountain corridor, are reliably staffed during hours of heavy use. Reduced programming at same sites in shoulder seasons.</p> <p>Limited (less than daily) NPS roving program at Cedar Grove and Mineral King.</p> <p>Provide full spectrum of shuttle bus guides and shuttle bus-stop roving services to support the Giant Forest shuttle system.</p> <p>Off -season NPS roving at selected sites at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills on weekends and holidays only.</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>Enhance and augment interpretive media programs, including especially web pages, exhibits, and publications. Create new self-guiding trails using waysides, brochures, or low wattage broadcast systems; add wayside exhibits; add TIS radio systems.</p>

	<p>Provide media support for Giant Forest shuttle system including both bus-stop and on-bus materials.</p> <p>Existing GS-11 shifts to GS-12; serves as media program lead and directly manages publications and exhibits.</p> <p>Add new GS-9 writer/editor position provide text for expanded media program.</p> <p>Add new GS-9 position to manage web pages and other electronic media including TIS radio and in-park video systems operated by concessioners. Position also will handle maintenance of electronic systems.</p> <p>Project Manager (GS-9, term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	Using NPS staff and funds, provide significant program of in-park educational services at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. Program overseen by Education Specialist (see Outreach Education).
Outreach Education	<p>Implement program that provides substantial, visible, frequent ranger presence in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade classrooms in Tulare/Kings/Fresno county region. Program also provides ranger presence at TCOE's SCICON facility for Tulare County 6th graders as well as for comparable facilities in other Central California counties. Overall program fully integrated and coordinated with educational programs presented by partners including TCOE, USACE, and Sequoia Riverlands Trust.</p> <p>NPS staff enlarged using NPS and donated funds. One PFT GS-11 Education specialist added to existing GS-9 education position; also multiple term and seasonal positions depending upon funding. VIPs recruited to support program.</p> <p>Also area of emphasis for SNHA Sequoia Field Institute. SFI staff present programs which are complementary to NPS effort.</p>
Public Affairs	<p>Public affairs program enhanced to allow more proactive management of media relationship. Community outreach activities in the form of talks to organizations, public events attendance, etc., pursued in balance with media work.</p> <p>One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer. Additional STF position created to increase office capacity.</p> <p>Fire Education Specialist position staffed if funded by FPA.</p>
Volunteer Management	Full-time VIP coordinator position created to recruit and manage staff to support in-park visitor services.
Program Management	<p>Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).</p> <p>Chief Park Interpreter invests significant time in fundraising.</p> <p>If supported by transportation fees, establish PSTF position to serve as NPS liaison and COR for Giant Forest shuttle system.</p>
Role of Partners	<p>SNHA provides approximately 40% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers.</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the fee-based Sequoia Field Institute, which offers in-depth, park-related seminars. Also operates and staffs the Beetle Rock Education Center.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund cooperates with NPS to raise funds for outreach education.</p>

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: SERVE ALL FUNCTIONS
CAPACITY LEVEL: REDUCED
ALTERNATIVE CODE: A-R

DESCRIPTION: (A-R) Using reduced capacity, continue to provide balanced spectrum of services including visitor orientation, interpretive programs, standards-based educational services and interpretive media. All services severely limited by capacity constraints. Several visitor centers closed or turned over the partners. All remaining walks and talks presented by SNHA. Staff time available for media management and education coordination reduced.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Giant Forest Museum daily except close four weekdays each week November through March. or turn over to partner.</p> <p>Discontinue NPS staffing at Lodgepole VC; either close or turn over to partner. Discontinue Cedar Grove VC; close, merge with wilderness permit function, or turn over to partner.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 25/75% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>Discontinue all ONPS-funded walks and talks. Merge Sequoia-North and Sequoia-South District Interpreter positions and abolish one GS-11 position.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists present fee-based interpretive programming daily at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; selected fee-based programs also presented in other areas and during shoulder seasons as funds and demand allow. Program scale determined by revenue flow generated.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>Ranger-naturalist presence most days at General Sherman and General Grant trees during peak season.</p> <p>Limited off-season roving at selected sites at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills on selected weekends and holidays responding to local needs.</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>Reduced attention focused primarily on webpage management, publications (park newspaper and brochure), and exhibit projects (primarily FLREA-funded). Reduce number of annual editions of park newspaper; simply park webpage so that less material is time-sensitive and required periodic revision.</p> <p>One PFT position (ONPS-funded) dedicated 60% to this function. Remaining time used to sustain orientation services and roving.</p> <p>Project Manager (term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	<p>Limited number of programs presented spring and fall at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills by local staff. Program overseen by District Interpreters. Current GS-9 education coordinator positions abolished.</p>
Outreach Education	<p>Implement program to extent possible using non-ONPS funding and tem employees.</p>
Public Affairs	<p>One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer.</p> <p>Fire Education Specialist (GS-11) staffed if funded by FPA.</p>
Volunteer Management	<p>Collateral duty assigned to existing staff.</p>
Program Management	<p>Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).</p>
Role of Partners	<p>SNHA provides approximately 75% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers.</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the fee-based Sequoia Field Institute, which may offer in-depth, park-related seminars, including naturalist activities during peak season at Grant Grove and Giant Forest.</p>

	<p>SNHA may consider closing Beetle Rock Education Center if use and finances do not justify investment.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund cooperates with NPS to raise funds for outreach education.</p>
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ALTERNATIVES TABLE

ALTERNATIVE: EMPHASIZE STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION
CAPACITY LEVEL: BASELINE
ALTERNATIVE CODE: B-B

DESCRIPTION: Using existing capacity, focus efforts primary on standards-based education services. Enhance in-park educational services; create new outreach program. Provide standards-based services both within parks and to schools in surrounding region. Reduce visitor orientation services, especially at Lodgepole and Cedar Grove; discontinue NPS-funded interpretive programming.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Giant Forest Museum daily except close three weekdays November through March.</p> <p>Discontinue NPS staffing at Lodgepole VC; either close or turn over to partner. Shift staffing to Roving/Assigned Stations duties.</p> <p>Discontinue Cedar Grove VC; close, merge with wilderness permit function, or turn over to partner.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 40/60% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>Discontinue all ONPS-funded walks and talks. Shift labor to education services. Merge Sequoia-North and Sequoia-South interpretive districts and convert one GS-11 position to GS-9.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists may present fee-based interpretive programming daily at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; selected fee-based programs also presented in other areas and during shoulder seasons as funds and demand allow. Program scale determined by revenue flow generated.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>Sustain low-level program using ONPS-funded labor diverted from LPVC operations.</p> <p>Ranger-naturalist presence most days during peak season at General Sherman and General Grant trees.</p> <p>Limited spring and fall roving at selected sites at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills.</p> <p>Winter roving on selected weekends and holidays limited to time available from permanent staff..</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>One PFT position (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function. Attention balanced primarily between webpage management, publications (park newspaper and brochure) management, and exhibit project management (primarily FLREA-funded).</p> <p>Project Manager (term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	<p>Enhance in-park education program. Provide substantial program of standards-based programs to schools groups visiting Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. Shift half of seasonal labor previously used for summer Interpretive Programs to spring and fall in-park education programming. Convert existing PFT GS-9 position to GS-11 to supervise this and outreach education.</p>
Outreach Education	<p>Implement new outreach education program using ONPS funds as well as donations and labor from partners. Shift other half of seasonal labor previously used for summer Interpretive Programs to outreach education services during school year. Program would be overseen by GS-11 education coordinator.</p>
Public Affairs	<p>One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer and handles both media and community-relations issues.</p> <p>Fire Education Specialist (GS-11) staffed if funded by FPA.</p>

Volunteer Management	Collateral duty assigned to Sequoia Interpretive District staff.
Division Management	<p>Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).</p> <p>Chief Park Interpreter invests significant time in fundraising.</p>
Role of Partners	<p>SNHA provides approximately 60% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers. (SNHA may provide 100% of staff to operate LPVC if it desires to keep this sales outlet open.)</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the Sequoia Field Institute, which focuses on standards-based educational programming; SFI also provides fee-based interpretive services, but only on self-sustaining basis.</p> <p>SNHA operates Beetle Rock Education Center.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund cooperates with NPS to raise funds for outreach education.</p>

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: EMPHASIZE STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION
CAPACITY LEVEL: ENHANCED
ALTERNATIVE CODE: B-E

DESCRIPTION: Focus is on maximizing potential for standards-based education activities. In-park programs are enhanced, but primary emphasis area is outreach education. Education staff enlarged to support this effort. Basic visitor center operations sustained. Low level NPS programs provide limited schedules of interpretive programming during peak season and roving at a few key sites.

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: EMPHASIZE STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION
CAPACITY LEVEL: REDUCED
ALTERNATIVE CODE: B-R

DESCRIPTION: Using reduced capacity, focus efforts primarily on standards-based outreach services. Shift emphasis away from visitor-oriented portions of orientation, interpretive program, and interpretive media functions. All services severely limited by capacity constraints.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Giant Forest Museum daily except close for four weekdays each week November through March, or turn facility over to SNHA four days each week.</p> <p>Discontinue NPS staffing at Lodgepole VC; either close or turn over to partner.</p> <p>Discontinue Cedar Grove VC; close, merge with wilderness permit function, or turn over to partner.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 25/75% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC if that agency funds positions.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>Discontinue all ONPS-funded walks and talks. Merge Sequoia-North and Sequoia-South interpretive districts and abolish one GS-11 position.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists may present fee-based interpretive programming daily at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; selected fee-based programs may also be presented in other areas and seasons as funds and demand allow. Program scale determined by revenue flow generated.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>Discontinue all peak-season ONPS-funded roving and assigned station work by seasonals.</p> <p>Off –season roving on selected weekends and holidays limited to time available from permanent staff.</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>Existing ONPS-funded GS-11 position 60% dedicated to this function. Attention balanced primarily between webpage management, publications (park newspaper and brochure) management, and exhibit project management (primarily FLREA-funded). Remaining 40% of time used to sustain education program.</p> <p>Project Manager (term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	Discontinue in-park education services. Provide teacher training workshops as staffing allows.
Outreach Education	Implement limited outreach education program using ONPS funds as well as donations and labor from partners. Focus all seasonal labor not needed for orientation services on this function. Program overseen by GS-9 education coordinator.
Public Affairs	<p>One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer, providing media and community outreach services.</p> <p>Fire Education Specialist (GS-11) staffed if funded by FPA.</p>
Volunteer Management	Collateral duty assigned to existing staff.
Program Management	<p>Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).</p> <p>Chief Park Interpreter leads fundraising effort.</p>
Role of Partners	SNHA provides approximately 75% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers. (SNHA may provide 100% of staff necessary to keep sales outlets at

	<p>Lodgepole and Cedar Grove open.)</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the Sequoia Field Institute, which provides fee-based, standards-based educational programming. SFI also provides fee-based interpretive services, but only on a self-sustaining basis.</p> <p>SNHA may decide to close Beetle Rock Education Center if use and finances do not justify operation.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund cooperates with NPS to raise funds for outreach education.</p>
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ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: EMPHASIZE VISITOR SERVICES
CAPACITY LEVEL: BASELINE
ALTERNATIVE CODE: C-B

DESCRIPTION: Using existing capacity, focus efforts primarily on park visitors. Sustain visitor orientation services and interpretive media; enhance interpretive programming; reduce and/or eliminate standards-based education services.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC, Giant Forest Museum, and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Lodgepole VC daily April through October. Operate Cedar Grove VC daily mid-June through Labor Day. Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 50/50% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC.
Interpretive Programs	Daily NPS interpretive programming at Cedar Grove, Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills during peak season. Reduced programming in same areas during shoulder seasons. Less-than-daily summer programming at Mineral King. Activity levels enhanced with labor shifted from education programming including GS-9 PFT position. During off-season, limited NPS programming on selected weekends and holidays at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. Sequoia Field Institute naturalists present fee-based interpretive programming daily at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; selected fee-based programs also presented in other areas and during shoulder seasons as funds and demand allow. SFI naturalists also operate fee-based seminar program offering more in-depth learning opportunities. Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.
Roving/Assigned Stations	Roving/assigned station NPS programming daily during peak season at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. Major emphasis sites are Grant Tree, Sherman Tree, and selected picnic and river sites in Hospital Rock / Ash Mountain corridor. Reduced programming at same sites in shoulder season. Limited (less than daily) NPS roving program at Cedar Grove, Crystal Cave, and Mineral King. Off season NPS roving at selected sites at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills on weekends and holidays.
Interpretive Media	Attention focused primarily on webpage management, publications (park newspaper and brochure) management, and exhibit project management (primarily FLREA-funded). One PFT position (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function. Project Manager (term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.
In-park Education	Discontinue existing program; shift PFT GS-9 and seasonal labor to Interpretive Programs and Roving/Assigning Station work.
Outreach Education	No NPS or SNHA program.
Public Affairs	Focus is on both media needs and community outreach.. One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer. Fire Education Specialist staffed if funded by FPA.
Volunteer Management	Collateral duty assigned to Sequoia-South Interpretive District Staff.
Program Management	Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).
Role of Partners	SNHA provides approximately 50% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers. SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including

	<p>supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the Sequoia Field Institute, which offers fee-based naturalist activities for visitors, as well as multi-day seminars.</p>
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ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: EMPHASIZE VISITOR SERVICES
CAPACITY LEVEL: ENHANCED
ALTERNATIVE CODE: C-E

DESCRIPTION: Emphasize services to park visitors. Lengthen visitor center hours and increase ranger presence in those facilities. Increase ranger-led walks and talks. Increase roving at key park features. Enhance waysides and other media that serve park visitors. Enlarge services for school groups visiting parks, but discontinue outreach efforts.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC, Giant Forest Museum, and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Lodgepole VC daily April through October, also weekends and holidays during remainder of the year. Operate Cedar Grove VC daily mid-May through mid-September. Lengthen peak-season operating hours to 7:00 – 20:00 at GGVC, LPVC, GFMU, and FHVC. Increase seasonal staff.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 60/40% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>Multiple daily NPS interpretive programs at Cedar Grove, Grant Grove, Giant Forest, Foothills, and Mineral King during peak season. Program has substantial variety and depth. Reduced programming in same areas during shoulder seasons. Seasonal staff enlarged and work seasons lengthened.</p> <p>Programs provided in Spanish as well as English.</p> <p>STF GS-9 park ranger positions restored at Lodgepole and Cedar Grove.</p> <p>Staff nature center in Giant Forest/Lodgepole area and provide activities for families with children.</p> <p>During off-season, limited NPS programming on selected weekends and holidays at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists present in-depth fee-based interpretive programming daily at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; selected fee-based programs also presented in other areas and during shoulder seasons as funds and demand justify. SFI naturalists also operate fee-based seminar program offering more in-depth learning opportunities.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>Roving/assigned station NPS programming daily during peak season at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, Crystal Cave, and Foothills. Major emphasis sites, including Grant Tree, Sherman Tree, Crystal Cave, and selected picnic and river sites in Hospital Rock / Ash Mountain corridor, are reliably staffed during hours of heavy use. Reduced programming at same sites in shoulder seasons.</p> <p>Limited NPS roving program at Cedar Grove and Mineral King.</p> <p>If shuttle system implemented in Giant Forest, assign seasonal rangers to buses and/or bus stops to provide visitor information and guidance.</p> <p>Off season NPS roving at selected sites at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills on weekends and holidays only.</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>Emphasis placed on increasing media services for park visitors. Additional self-guiding trails developed. Number of TIS radio systems increased. Wayside exhibits increased in number and quality.</p> <p>Existing GS-11 PFT position remains dedicated to this function. Attention balanced between webpage management, publications (park newspaper and brochure) management, and exhibit project management (primarily FLREA-funded).</p>

	Project management staff enlarged as required to work on projects using term hiring authority and project funds.
In-park Education	Sustain and enlarge existing program by augmenting seasonal NPS staff in shoulder seasons.
Outreach Education	No NPS or SNHA program.
Public Affairs	Focus is on both media needs and community outreach.. One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer. Additional seasonal support position funded. Fire Education Specialist staffed if funded by FPA.
Volunteer Management	Full-time VIP coordinator position created to recruit and manage staff to support in-park visitor services.
Program Management	Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6). Chief Park Interpreter addressed fundraising as a priority.
Role of Partners	SNHA provides approximately 40% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers. SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours. SNHA operates the Sequoia Field Institute, which offers fee-based naturalist activities for visitors, as well as multi-day seminars. Sequoia Fund focuses efforts on project that will support in-park visitor services.

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: EMPHASIZE VISITOR SERVICES
CAPACITY LEVEL: REDUCED
ALTERNATIVE CODE: C-R

DESCRIPTION: Focus limited interpretive program on busiest areas of parks. Sustain programs there to maximum degree possible by reducing visitor orientation, roving, and interpretive media. No standards-based educational services provided.

Service Level
<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Limit NPS VC hours to no more than 8:00 to 17:00 hours even at peak season. Extended hours only if staffed by SNHA on a basis that makes economic sense including utility costs.</p> <p>Operate Giant Forest Museum daily except close four weekdays (or turn over to partner) November through March.</p> <p>Discontinue NPS staffing at Lodgepole VC; either close or turn over to partner. Shift staffing to Roving/Assigned Stations duties.</p> <p>Discontinue Cedar Grove VC; either close or turn over to partner or wilderness permit function.</p> <p>Merge Sequoia-North and Sequoia-South Interpretive Districts and abolish one GS-11 district interpreter position.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 25/75% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC if funded by that agency.</p>
<p>Limited daily NPS interpretive programming at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; very limited programming at these sites during shoulder seasons. No NPS program at Cedar Grove or Mineral King.</p> <p>During off-season, very limited NPS programming on selected weekends and holidays at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills; programs presented only by year-round staff and only as time allows.</p> <p>No nature center program in Giant Forest/Lodgepole area.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists may present fee-based interpretive programming daily at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; selected fee-based programs also presented in other areas and during shoulder seasons as funds and demand allow. SFI naturalists also operate fee-based seminar program offering more in-depth learning opportunities. Program scope determined by ability of offering to sustain themselves economically.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p>
<p>To degree supported by dedicated transportation fee funding, and as determined appropriate, provide shuttle bus guides and/or shuttle bus-stop roving services to support the Giant Forest shuttle system.</p> <p>Roving/assigned station NPS programming daily during peak season at Grant Grove and Giant Forest. Major emphasis sites are Grant Tree and Sherman Tree.</p> <p>Off season NPS roving at selected sites on weekends and holidays only responding to local use needs.</p>
<p>Attention focused primarily on webpage management, publications (park newspaper and brochure) management, and exhibit project management (primarily FLREA-funded). One PFT position (ONPS-funded) dedicated 100% to this function.</p> <p>If supported by transportation fee funding, provide media support for Giant Forest shuttle system including both bus-stop and on-bus materials.</p>

Project Manager (term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.
Discontinue program; abolish GS-9 education coordinator position.
SNHA may offer fee-based educational services within park if demand proves sufficient and program can be made self-sustaining.
Seek to establish program using term employees and outside funding. Implement program only to extent possible using non-ONPS funding.
SNHA may offer fee-based educational services outside park if demand proves sufficient and program can be made self-sustaining.
Park responds to media inquiries but has only limited proactive PIO capacity. Community outreach activities in the form of talks to organizations, public events attendance, etc., pursued in balance with media work.
One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer. Fire Education Specialist position staffed if funded by FPA. Seasonal media assistant position staffed if funded by Visitor Protection Division.
Collateral duty assigned to Sequoia-South Interpretive District Staff.
Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).
Chief invests significant time in fundraising activities.
If supported by transportation fees, establish term or LFT position to serve as NPS liaison and COR for Giant Forest shuttle system.
SNHA provides <75% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers.
SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.
SNHA operates the Sequoia Field Institute, which offers in-depth, park-related seminars on a fee basis. Same program may offer interpretive programs and education programs if demand proves sufficient to sustain effort financially.
SNHA may consider closing Beetle Rock Education Center if use and revenue do not justify continued investment in facility.
Sequoia Fund cooperates with NPS to raise funds for outreach education.
Donation funds may also be sought to sustain media programs and products.

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: EMPHASIZE TECHNOLOGY AND INTERPRETIVE MEDIA
CAPACITY LEVEL: BASELINE
ALTERNATIVE CODE: D-B

DESCRIPTION: Emphasize technology and interpretive media to communicate park messages. Reduce number of seasonal positions and shift funds to media program. Upgrade web-based services. Explore more intense use of TIS radio systems and other electronic media. Focus standards-based educational services on web. Limit NPS staff to visitor orientation function at visitor centers. Replace ranger-guided interpretive activities with self-guiding activities based on exhibits, brochures, or electronic media. Increase number of self-guiding trails.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Giant Forest Museum daily except close four days each week November through March. or turn over to partner.</p> <p>Discontinue NPS staffing at Lodgepole VC; either close or turn over to partner. Discontinue Cedar Grove VC; close, merge with wilderness permit function, or turn over to partner.</p> <p>Shift resources saved to additional funding for interpretive media program.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 40/60% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>No NPS-funded interpretive programs presented by park rangers. Enlarge program of self-guiding trails by adding multiple new venues.</p> <p>Using technology, enlarge variety of languages in which park information is available.</p> <p>Shift resources saved to additional funding for interpretive media program.</p> <p>Merge Sequoia-North and Sequoia-South interpretive districts and shift surplus position to interpretive media office.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists present fee-based interpretive programming daily at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; selected fee-based programs also presented in other areas and during shoulder seasons as funds and demand allow. SFI naturalists also operate fee-based seminar program offering more in-depth learning opportunities.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>Limited roving/assigned station NPS programming daily during peak season at Grant Grove and Giant Forest. Major emphasis sites are Grant Tree and Sherman Tree</p> <p>Off season NPS roving at selected sites on weekends and holidays only.</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>Enhance and augment interpretive media programs, including especially web pages, exhibits, and publications.</p> <p>Existing GS-11 shifts to GS-12; serves as overall media program lead and directly manages publications and exhibits work.</p> <p>Add new (term) GS-9 writer/editor position to be funded by resources shifted from staff reductions in visitor centers and interpretive programs.</p> <p>Add new GS-9 position (vice Sequoia North District Interpreter) to manage web pages and</p>

	<p>other electronic media including TIS radio and in-park video systems operated by concessioners.</p> <p>Shift GS-9 education coordinator position to this branch to manage education web pages; see below.</p> <p>Project Manager (GS-9, term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	Shift focus from ranger-hosted activities to self-guided activities based on web page pre-visit information. Utilize existing ONPS-funded education coordinator to coordinate this function
Outreach Education	Pursue outreach education through internet strategy. Utilize existing ONPS-funded education coordinator to coordinate this function
Public Affairs	<p>Function addresses both news media and community outreach issues. One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer.</p> <p>Fire Education Specialist staffed if funded by FPA.</p>
Volunteer Management	Collateral duty assigned to Sequoia Interpretive District staff.
Program Management	Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).
Role of Partners	<p>SNHA provides approximately 60% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers.</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the Sequoia Field Institute, which offers fee-based naturalist activities for visitors, as well as multi-day seminars.</p> <p>SNHA assists with data distribution (IPOD download) sales.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund to consider raising funds for park implementation of new technologies.</p>

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: EMPHASIZE TECHNOLOGY AND INTERPRETIVE MEDIA
CAPACITY LEVEL: ENHANCED
ALTERNATIVE CODE: D-E

DESCRIPTION: Emphasize technology and interpretive media to communicate park messages in lieu of direct personal services. Serve both park visitors and other audiences. Upgrade web-based services. Explore more intense use of TIS radio systems and other electronic media including low-wattage and/or satellite broadcast systems for outdoor use. Explore new technologies including IPOD downloading as means of providing visitor information Base standards-based educational services on web. Provide limited scale roving programs. Augment these with significantly enhanced self-guiding activities based on exhibits, brochures, or electronic media. Increase number of self-guiding trails.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC, Giant Forest Museum, and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Lodgepole VC daily April through October. Operate Cedar Grove VC daily mid-June through Labor Day.</p> <p>Enhance visitor centers with interactive exhibitry</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 50/50% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC if funded by that agency.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>Develop electronic self-guiding trails (with hand-held receivers) at key park features like Grant and Sherman trees. Provided similar services for motor touring.</p> <p>Using technology, enlarge variety of languages in which park information is available.</p> <p>If shuttle system implemented in Giant Forest, develop electronic audio tours to provide information to riders.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists present fee-based interpretive programming daily at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; selected fee-based programs also presented in other areas and during shoulder seasons as funds and demand allow. SFI naturalists also operate fee-based seminar program offering more in-depth learning opportunities.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>Limited roving/assigned station NPS programming daily during peak season at Grant Grove and Giant Forest. Major emphasis sites are Grant Tree and Sherman Tree</p> <p>Off season NPS roving at selected sites on weekends and holidays only.</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>Enhance and augment interpretive media programs, including especially web pages, exhibits, and publications. Create new self-guiding trails using waysides, brochures, or low wattage and/or satellite broadcast systems; add wayside exhibits; add TIS radio systems.</p> <p>Explore and implement if applicable new technologies for interpretive purposes including audio and video file-downloading to IPOD units.</p> <p>Existing GS-11 shifts to GS-12; serves as media program lead and directly manages publications and exhibits.</p> <p>Add new (term) GS-9 writer/editor position to be funded by resources shifted from staff reductions in visitor centers and interpretive programs.</p>

	<p>Add new GS-9 position (vice Sequoia North District Interpreter) to manage web pages and other electronic media including TIS radio and in-park video systems operated by concessioners. Position would also address maintenance of technological systems.</p> <p>Shift GS-9 education coordinator position to this branch to manage education web pages; see below.</p> <p>Project Manager (GS-9, term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	Shift focus from ranger-hosted activities to self-guided activities based on web page pre-visit information or other new technologies.
Outreach Education	Pursue outreach education through internet strategy.
Public Affairs	<p>One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer.</p> <p>Fire Education Specialist staffed if funded by FPA.</p>
Volunteer Management	Dedicated GS-9 position for purpose of recruiting volunteers with technological skills.
Program Management	Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).
Role of Partners	<p>SNHA provides approximately 50% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers.</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the Sequoia Field Institute, which offers fee-based naturalist activities for visitors, as well as multi-day seminars.</p> <p>SNHA assists with data distribution (IPOD download) sales.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund to consider raising funds for park implementation of new technologies.</p>

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: EMPHASIZE TECHNOLOGY AND INTERPRETIVE MEDIA
CAPACITY LEVEL: REDUCED
ALTERNATIVE CODE: D-R

DESCRIPTION: Emphasize technology and interpretive media to communicate park messages. Explore more intense use of TIS radio systems and other electronic media. Focus standards-based educational services on web. Limit NPS staff to visitor orientation function at visitor centers. Replace ranger-guided interpretive activities with self-guiding activities based on exhibits or brochures. Increase number of self-guiding trails. Reduce overall program by ceasing seasonal services utilizing ranger-naturalists.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Giant Forest Museum daily except close four days each week November through March. or turn over to partner.</p> <p>Discontinue NPS staffing at Lodgepole VC; either close or turn over to partner. Discontinue Cedar Grove VC; close, merge with wilderness permit function, or turn over to partner.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 25/75% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>No NPS-funded interpretive programs presented by park rangers. Enlarge program of self-guiding trails by adding multiple new venues.</p> <p>Merge Sequoia-North and Sequoia-South interpretive districts and abolish surplus position.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists present fee-based interpretive programming daily at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; selected fee-based programs also presented in other areas and during shoulder seasons as funds and demand allow. SFI naturalists also operate fee-based seminar program offering more in-depth learning opportunities.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	No NPS-funded roving or assigned station program.
Interpretive Media	<p>Focus available NPS staff on interpretive media programs, including especially web pages, exhibits, and publications.</p> <p>Existing GS-11 position to focus on publications, exhibits, and branch management.</p> <p>Project Manager (term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	Shift focus from ranger-hosted activities to self-guided activities based on web page pre-visit information. Abolish existing ONPS-funded GS-9 education coordinator.
Outreach Education	Pursue outreach education through internet strategy
Public Affairs	<p>Function addresses both media and community outreach issues. One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer.</p> <p>Fire Education Specialist staffed, if funded by FPA.</p>
Volunteer Management	Collateral duty assigned to Sequoia Interpretive District staff.
Program Management	Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).
Role of Partners	SNHA provides approximately 75% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the

	<p>parks' visitor centers.</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the Sequoia Field Institute, which offers fee-based naturalist activities for visitors, as well as multi-day seminars.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund to consider raising funds for park implementation of new technologies.</p>
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ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section of the plan is to assess the relative value to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks of the four alternative approaches proposed for resource education at the parks. To ensure consistency in our analysis, each of the alternatives will be subjected to a consistent set of questions. These questions are:

1. How well does the alternative carry out the resource education goals of the General Management Plan?
2. How well does the alternative meet the needs of park visitors?
3. How well does the alternative meet the needs of standards-based educational institutions?
4. What effect does the alternative have on other park programs?
5. How ambitious is the alternative in its need for fiscal and staff resources?
6. How well does the alternative meet the needs of the NPS to communicate its mission and programs to the public?

In order to address these questions in a consistent fashion, it is useful to provide some definition as to what these questions mean.

Question 1: How well does the alternative carry out the resource education goals of the General Management Plan?

The GMP does not propose an integrated program of educational initiatives for the parks. That is the purpose of this plan. It does, however, establish a number of long-term (15-20 year) goals for the parks' resource education program. Of these, those that relate most directly to the alternatives can be summarized as follows:

- Strengthen educational and outreach programs
- Expand, redesign, or add educational facilities
- Prepare a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan
- Expand ranger-naturalist programs within the parks
- Increase park orientation
- Greatly enlarge outreach efforts
- Create a classroom-focused website
- Expand the Grant Grove Visitor Center
- Provide a visitor center at Cedar Grove
- Retain the Lodgepole Visitor Center
- Construct a permanent amphitheater at Wuksachi Village
- Enhance the self-guiding trail system at Grant Grove
- Provide ranger-naturalist services in Giant Forest
- Expand the Foothills Visitor Center

- Provide more interpretive services at Mineral King
- Retain tours at Crystal Cave

Several of these goals relate to the construction of new facilities, and are thus beyond the scope of this plan, which focuses on operational issues. For this reason, the following questions will be dropped from our analysis:

- Expand, redesign, or add educational facilities
- Expand the Grant Grove Visitor Center
- Construct a permanent amphitheater at Wuksachi Village
- Expand the Foothills Visitor Center

In addition it is not useful to evaluate the GMP goal that a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan be created since this plan has now been drafted.

All other goals will be evaluated.

Question 2: How well does the alternative meet the needs of park visitors?

Park visitors generally interact with the resource education program at several levels. The first occurs as they seek orientation information prior to their visits, generally either by visiting the SEKI webpage or by calling the park and requesting pre-visit information. Once in the parks, visitors usually seek orientation information at visitor centers and through interpretive media like free publications and waysides. The final level comes when visitors seek involvement in learning activities such as walks, talks, and evening programs. Roving/assigned station services also play a role here.

Question 3: How well does the alternative meet the needs of standards-based educational institutions?

The world of standards-based education looks to Sequoia and Kings Canyon for several different sorts of services. These include facilities and services for visiting school groups, outreach education services, and web-based services.

Question 4: What effect does the alternative have on other park programs?

Resource education activities help support the needs of many other park divisions and programs. Visitor Centers, for example, provide campground information, explain park laws and regulations, and warn visitors about risks and dangers. Interpretive programs contain much information about resources management issues and programs. Public affairs work with the news media provides an outlet for information about park management directions to neighbors and interested special interest groups. Changes in these programs therefore has the obvious potential of impacting non-interpretive park programs.

Question 5: How ambitious is the alternative in its need for fiscal and staff resources?

In the baseline political setting, many questions exist about the best use of federal funds and the proper long-term level of federal staffing. For this reason, it is useful to outline the implications of each of the proposals in terms of the funds and personnel they would require. Because the alternatives are conceptual in nature, this question will be answered through comparison of the relative expense of the alternatives rather than with hard numbers.

Question 6: How well does the alternative meet the needs of the NPS to communicate its mission and programs to the public?

In answering this question, an attempt will be made to evaluate the overall impact of the proposed balance of services on these parks.

ALTERNATIVE A: BALANCED FOCUS

Alternative A: Sustain a balanced program that serves all audiences (including park visitors, park neighbors, and educational organizations (visiting school groups and off-site schools) in an equitable fashion.

Question 1: How well does the alternative carry out the resource education goals of the General Management Plan?

GMP GOAL	Enhanced Level	Baseline Level	Reduced Level
<i>Strengthen education and outreach programs.</i>	Yes, limited enhancement in most program areas.	No. This level of activity does not strengthen programs.	No. Programs and services reduced.
<i>Expand ranger-naturalist programs within the parks</i>	Yes. Program level increased above baseline.	No, but programs do continue at baseline level.	No. All programs are discontinued.
<i>Increase park orientation</i>	No, but high level of orientation sustained.	No.	No.
<i>Greatly enlarge outreach efforts</i>	Limited increase possible and possibly more if private funds raised.	No.	No.
<i>Create a classroom-focused website</i>	Yes. Increased staffing would support	No.	No.
<i>Provide a visitor center at Cedar Grove</i>	Yes, on a seasonal basis.	Yes, on a seasonal basis.	No. Facility closed.
<i>Retain the Lodgepole Visitor Center</i>	Yes, on a seasonal basis.	Yes, on a seasonal basis	No. Facility closed.
<i>Enhance the self-guiding trail system at Grant Grove</i>	Yes. Increased staffing would support	No.	No.
<i>Provide ranger-naturalist services in Giant Forest</i>	Yes	Yes	No.
<i>Provide more interpretive services at Mineral King</i>	Yes. Increased staffing would support.	No change in service level from baseline	No.
<i>Retain tours at Crystal Cave</i>	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

Question 2: How well does the alternative meet the needs of park visitors?

Enhanced Level: The needs of park visitors are well met. The major visitor centers operate year round, and Lodgepole and Cedar Grove are available seasonally. Rangers are usually present in visitors centers. A strong program of traditional interpretive activities continues. Roving rangers are present at key features and are an integral part of the Giant Forest shuttle system. Investment in off-site visitor centers would extend visitor services to neighbors and persons not yet arrived at the parks.

Baseline Level: The needs of park visitors are met reasonably well. All visitor centers are open (Lodgepole and Cedar Grove seasonally) but there is more SNHA presence and less NPS. Interpretive activities and roving occur at levels that resemble recent years. Rangers play a visible role in the Giant Forest shuttle system.

Reduced Level: Park visitors will notice very definite drop-off in services and satisfaction. Lodgepole and Cedar Grove visitor centers no longer operate or are staffed entirely by partners and thus do not function as NPS facilities. Almost all visitor center staffing comes from SNHA. Interpretive activities have been discontinued except for SNHA fee-based programs. Roving occurs at two key locations only.

Question 3: How well does the alternative meet the needs of standards-based educational institutions?

Enhanced Level: A significant program of outreach education is created using a mix of NPS and donated funds. The existing within-park programs are increased in number.

Baseline Level: The parks continue to offer limited programming for visiting school groups; there is no NPS outreach program. A small outreach program is operated by SNHA.

Reduced Level: Very little is done for standards-based education. The education coordinator position is abolished. A very limited program continues for visiting school groups; there is no NPS outreach capacity. Any outreach that occurs would require donated funds.

Question 4: What effect does the alternative have on other park programs?

Enhanced Level: At the enhanced level, the effects of other park programs are universally positive. The Resource Education Program effectively carries out all of its various roles. Visitors are given numerous opportunities to understand park rules, recognize hazards, and study resources management issues.

Baseline Level: The effectiveness of the program is still relatively strong at this level. No major interpretive support roles are completely dropped.

Reduced Level: At the reduced level, major service gaps begin to develop. The ability of the resources education program to support park operations through visitor orientation is weakened by the closure of the Lodgepole and Cedar Grove visitor centers; the same effect results from the reduction of the Giant Forest Museum to a less-than-daily facility during the winter. It could be expected that visitor protection and campground staffs would have to pick up substantial parts of this workload. The termination of interpretive walks and talks removes one of the most effective methods of building understanding and support for resources management programs, and the programs will thus be more controversial and difficult to manage.

Question 5: How ambitious is the alternative in its need for fiscal and staff resources?

Enhanced Level: This is by far the most expensive alternative and service level in terms of fiscal and staff resources. To provide the level of service proposed, the following would be required:

- GS-9 STF ranger positions are reestablished at Lodgepole and Cedar Grove
- Additional NPS seasonal staff for park visitor centers
- Additional NPS seasonal staff for off-site visitor centers
- Additional NPS seasonal staff for interpretive activities
- Media branch chief promoted from GS-11 to GS-12
- A new PFT writer-editor position
- Additional NPS seasonal staff to present educational activities
- A new PFT GS-11 education specialist position
- Additional NPS seasonal staff for outreach education
- Additional part-time labor in the public affairs office
- A new PFT GS-9 volunteer coordinator position

Baseline Level:

This level of service would require that the baseline program capacity be sustained. Some assets would be re-allocated.

Reduced Level:

Baseline permanent staff would be reduced by one GS-11 district interpreter's position and by one GS-9 education coordinator position.

Significant reductions would occur in NPS seasonal staffing including elimination of the GS-7 lead position at Cedar Grove and reductions in ranger-naturalists in all areas.

Question 6: How well does the alternative meet the needs of the NPS to communicate its mission and programs to the public?

Enhanced Level: The parks' ability to communicate would be significantly increased. Traditional in-park avenues for communication would be preserved and outreach education programs begun on a significant scale. The parks would be in a significantly better position to communicate their mission and programs.

Baseline Level: There is really little change here from the existing program. In-park communication would be relatively strong, and outreach efforts extremely weak. The park would continue to be well-supported by its regular users but would make little progress with neighboring communities or new generations of Central Californians. In the long run this path would leave the parks weaker than they are now.

Reduced Level: At this capacity level, the ability of the parks to communicate their mission and programs would be severely compromised. Traditional forms of in-park communication would be further reduced and outreach capacity would remain non-existent. The parks' would be expected, over time, to be significantly less connected to both visitors and neighbors.

ALTERNATIVE B: EMPHASIZE STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION:

Alternative B: Place primary emphasis on the needs of standards-based education; services for park visitors are reduced or in some cases terminated.

Question 1: How well does the alternative carry out the resource education goals of the General Management Plan?

GMP GOAL	Enhanced Level	Baseline Level	Reduced Level
<i>Strengthen education and outreach programs.</i>	Services for standards-based education significantly enhanced; other services reduced.	Services for standards-based education enlarged; other programs reduced or eliminated.	Limited services for standards-based education; most other services severely reduced or eliminated.
<i>Expand ranger-naturalist programs within the parks</i>	No, programs are reduced to relatively low level to allow focus on education	No ranger-naturalist programs. SNHA presents some fee-based programs.	No ranger-naturalist programs. SNHA presents some fee-based programs.
<i>Increase park orientation</i>	No. Service approximately equal to baseline level	No. Lodgepole and Cedar Grove closed.	No. Lodgepole and Cedar Grove closed.
<i>Greatly enlarge outreach efforts</i>	Yes. Significant program created.	Yes.	Limited new program created
<i>Create a classroom-focused website</i>	Yes.	Yes.	No.
<i>Provide a visitor center at Cedar Grove</i>	Yes, seasonally.	No.	No.
<i>Retain the Lodgepole Visitor Center</i>	Yes, seasonally.	No.	No.

<i>Enhance the self-guiding trail system at Grant Grove</i>	No.	No.	No.
<i>Provide ranger-naturalist services in Giant Forest</i>	Yes, but only a limited program.	No.	No.
<i>Provide <u>more</u> interpretive services at Mineral King</i>	No.	No.	No.
<i>Retain tours at Crystal Cave</i>	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

Question 2: How well does the alternative meet the needs of park visitors?

Enhanced Level: Even at the enhanced level, Alternative B does a relatively weak job of serving park visitors. Visitor centers are all open but interpretive programming is very limited. Roving occurs only at a few key sites. The visitor services program here is well below the one conducted in recent years.

Baseline Level: When overall program capacity resources are reduced to the baseline level and allocated under the priorities of Alternative B, the resulting level of services for park visitors is low. The Lodgepole and Cedar Grove visitor centers are gone or turned over to partners with no NPS presence; interpretive activities are also gone except for fee-based SNHA events. Roving duty is reduced well below traditional levels.

Reduced Level: This level of service provides very little for park visitors. Visitor centers are reduced as in the baseline-level proposal but NPS presence is reduced further within the remaining facilities. There are no ranger-naturalist activities nor any no roving ranger presence.

Question 3: How well does the alternative meet the needs of standards-based educational institutions?

Enhanced Level: At the enhanced level, this alternative offers major new benefits and programs to standards-based institutions. Not only is the parks' existing within-parks programming for school groups increased, but also a major outreach capacity is created. The overall effect here would be very beneficial for schools.

Baseline Level: The improvements are still significant both within the parks and for the outreach function.

Reduced Level: At the reduced level, all emphasis is placed on creating a limited outreach program. Within-parks services are discontinued.

Question 4: What effect does the alternative have on other park programs?

Enhanced Level: At the enhanced level, Alternative B would support park operations to approximately the level seen in recent years. Visitor center services would be widely present with resulting benefits for protection and campgrounds and a limited interpretive program would support resources management activities. Over time, the enlarged education program would be expected to product very substantial additional understanding and support for park management and programs, but this improvement would come at the cost of short-term services and support.

Baseline Level: At the baseline level, Alternative B would leave major gaps in the parks' information and orientation programs. The changes proposed for the Lodgepole and Cedar Grove visitor centers would have negative effects in the campground and visitor protection staffs. The loss of all interpretive activities and most roving would intensify these losses.

Reduced Level: At the reduced level, Alternative B would likely result in major problems for other park programs. Visitor orientation would be much reduced, and there would be no walks, talks, or roving. In essence, except for a small outreach education program, the parks would be nearly voiceless. The impact upon other park programs could be substantial and negative.

Question 5: How ambitious is the alternative in its need for fiscal and staff resources?

Enhanced Level: This proposal would not be as expensive as Alternative A at the enhanced level but additional resources would be required, including:

- New GS-11 educational media position
- New GS-11 education specialist position
- Additional NPS seasonal labor

Baseline Level:

This level of service would require that baseline program capacity be sustained. Some assets would be re-allocated.

Reduced Level:

One GS-11 district interpreter's position would be abolished.

Significant reductions would occur in NPS seasonal staffing including elimination of the GS-7 lead position at Cedar Grove and reductions in ranger-naturalists in all areas.

Question 6: How well does the alternative meet the needs of the NPS to communicate its mission and programs to the public?

Enhanced Level: The results for the parks are mixed. The ability of the parks to communicate and connect with neighboring Central California communities is greatly improved, but this alternative, even at the Enhanced Level, does not serve park visitors well. The results would thus be uneven.

Baseline Level: The results described above are even more pronounced here. Through the standards-based emphasis, the ability of the parks to communicate its mission and program to neighboring communities would be significantly improved, but at this level, the traditional programs that provide understanding to those who actually use the parks would be definitely reduced. This would be expected to weaken understanding of the parks among its users.

Reduced Level: Nearly everyone loses here. The park would gain a limited outreach program but at the cost of abandoning all within-parks services for school groups. Park users would receive very poor services. The ability of the parks to communicate would be significantly weaker than in the past.

ALTERNATIVE C: EMPHASIZE VISITOR SERVICES

Alternative C: Give primacy to the needs of park visitors. Standards-based services are proportionally minimized.

Question 1: How well does the alternative carry out the resource education goals of the General Management Plan?

GMP GOAL	Enhanced Level	Baseline Level	Reduced Level
<i>Strengthen education and outreach programs.</i>	Visitor services increased, but no significant outreach services offered.	Visitor services sustained, but no significant outreach services offered.	Visitor services reduced but basic level of service sustained; no outreach offered.
<i>Expand ranger-naturalist programs within the parks</i>	Yes. Programs significantly increased	Yes, minimal increase.	No. Program continues at past level.
<i>Increase park orientation</i>	Yes. All visitor centers operated and hours increased.	No change from baseline pattern.	No.
<i>Greatly enlarge outreach efforts</i>	No. No program offered	No.	No.
<i>Create a classroom-focused website</i>	No. Not an area of focus.	No.	No.
<i>Provide a visitor center at Cedar Grove</i>	Yes, seasonally.	Yes, seasonally.	No.
<i>Retain the Lodgepole Visitor Center</i>	Yes, seasonally.	Yes, seasonally.	No.
<i>Enhance the self-guiding trail system at Grant Grove</i>	Possible under this staffing plan	No.	No.
<i>Provide ranger-naturalist services in Giant Forest</i>	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

<i>Provide <u>more</u> interpretive services at Mineral King</i>	Yes.	No.	No.
<i>Retain tours at Crystal Cave</i>	Yes	Yes.	Yes.

Question 2: How well does the alternative meet the needs of park visitors?

Enhanced: The needs of park visitors are positively addressed at this level. Visitor center services are extended; traditional interpretive activities are sustained and increased, including roving. Fee-based SNHA activities supplement the NPS program.

Baseline: Park visitor needs are still well served at this level. All visitor centers are operated; interpretive activities and roving are sustained; SNHA fee-based activities are added.

Reduced: Despite the focus on visitors in this alternative, visitor services suffer at the reduced level. The Lodgepole and Cedar Grove visitor centers disappear; a small program of interpretive activities is sustained but roving is limited to a few key sites. SNHA fee-based interpretation is available to supplement NPS program.

Question 3: How well does the alternative meet the needs of standards-based educational institutions?

Enhanced: Even at the enhanced level, this alternative offers very little to the standards-based learning community. The existing within-parks program is sustained but no outreach effort is supported.

Baseline: No services are offered either within the parks or outside.

Reduced: No services are offered either within the parks or outside.

Question 4: What effect does the alternative have on other park programs?

Enhanced Level: In most ways, other programs are well supported here. Visitors are well-informed about both orientation and resources management issues. Visitor protection and resources management staff reap the benefits of having well-informed visitors. The weakness here is that the investment in long-term community-based support is minimal. Little is done here for the school groups that will grow up to become the parks' neighbors in coming decades.

Baseline Level: At baseline level, Alternative C still support in-park efforts by the other divisions relatively well, although not as strongly as at the advanced level. Again, the cost is in the area of long-term community support, which is not being built here.

Reduced Level: At reduced level, Alternative C provides limited support for in-park management programs and nothing for longer-term community-based education.

Question 5: How ambitious is the alternative in its need for fiscal and staff resources?

Enhanced Level: This would be a relatively inexpensive program at the enhanced level. Two new permanent positions would be created through the restoration of GS-9 STF ranger positions at Lodgepole and Cedar Grove.. Additional seasonal staff to provide visitor services would be required.

Baseline Level: This level of service would require that baseline program capacity be sustained. Some assets would be re-allocated.

Reduced Level: Abolish GS-9 education coordinator position. Significant reductions would occur in NPS seasonal staffing.

Question 6: How well does the alternative meet the needs of the NPS to communicate its mission and programs to the public?

Enhanced: This alternative would do a good job of keeping the parks in touch with their users, both traditional and those who are new to the parks. The obvious weakness would be in community outreach. Without an outreach education program, and with no increase in public affairs emphasis, there would be little opportunity to strengthen the connection between the parks and Central California.

Baseline: Although the within-parks programs would not be as strong as those proposed at the Enhanced Level, the overall results for the parks would differ only in degree.

Reduced: Under this scenario, visitor services would be weakened below the recent service level while outreach connections would basically not exist. This alternative would thus sustain some contact with park visitors at the cost of community relationships.

ALTERNATIVE D: EMPHASIZE TECHNOLOGY AND INTERPRETIVE MEDIA

Alternative D: Serve both park visitors and standards-based clients not through direct use of staff (rangers and others) but primarily through the extensive use of existing and emerging electronic and graphic media.

Question 1: How well does the alternative carry out the resource education goals of the General Management Plan?

GMP GOAL	Enhanced Level	Baseline Level	Reduced Level
<i>Strengthen education and outreach programs.</i>	Electronic and graphic programs greatly strengthened; most other programs reduced.	Electronic and graphic programs somewhat strengthened; most other programs reduced or eliminated.	Electronic and graphic programs somewhat strengthened; many other programs eliminated.
<i>Expand ranger-naturalist programs within the parks</i>	No.	No.	No.
<i>Increase park orientation</i>	No increase; existing operations sustained.	No. Lodgepole and Cedar Grove closed.	No. Lodgepole and Cedar Grove closed.
<i>Greatly enlarge outreach efforts</i>	Greatly increased outreach through internet but no outreach with NPS personnel.	Greatly increased outreach through internet but no outreach with NPS personnel	Greatly increased outreach through internet but no outreach with NPS personnel
<i>Create a classroom-focused website</i>	Yes. This would be a focus area of this alternative	Yes. This would be a focus area of this alternative	Yes. This would be a focus area of this alternative
<i>Provide a visitor center at Cedar Grove</i>	Yes, seasonally.	No.	No.
<i>Retain the Lodgepole Visitor Center</i>	Yes, seasonally.	No.	No.
<i>Enhance the self-guiding trail system at Grant Grove</i>	Yes. Self-guiding trails would be increased parks-wide	No.	No.
<i>Provide ranger-naturalist services in Giant Forest</i>	No.	No.	No.
<i>Provide <u>more</u> interpretive services at Mineral King</i>	Increased waysides and self-guiding opportunities; no personal services.	No.	No.
<i>Retain tours at Crystal Cave</i>	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

Question 2: How well does the alternative meet the needs of park visitors?

Enhanced: This alternative seeks to meet visitor needs through the use of media rather than direct person-to-person programming. This produces good results for some functions like orientation but is much weaker for those visitors who seek in-depth experiences or want on-the-site training about how to best enjoy the parks.

Baseline: There are small increases in certain aspects of visitor services but in many areas the overall trend is downward. This would serve visitor needs less well than past practice.

Reduced: The media-based programs here are minimal while the loss of traditional visitor services is substantial.

Question 3: How well does the alternative meet the needs of standards-based educational institutions?

Enhanced: The shift to web-based programming for schools greatly widens the availability of parks messages, but also produces less-compelling educational experiences for those who participate. There is a clear trade-off here with more distant schools gaining and schools in the park region having much less powerful experiences. The balance between these two values is subjective.

Baseline: The results are much the same as at the enhanced level.

Reduced: At the reduced capacity level, web-page outreach could produce more results than having rangers provide a very small direct services programs to schools.

Question 4: What effect does the alternative have on other park programs?

Enhanced Level: The effects here are not fully knowable. It is not clear how well visitors would accept the shifting of orientation services to non-personal media, but current trends in society suggest that large segments of the society might accept the change and prosper under a new system. The reduction of face-to-face capacity within the resources education program would reduce the parks' ability to provide individual visitor programs and thus intensify work for visitor protection and campground staff. The long-term impacts on the resources management programs remain unclear. Under this approach there would be a substantial potential for visitors to learn a great deal about the parks prior to their visits or through electronic media during their visits. Whether this information would be as compelling or as widely distributed as through traditional means is not clear at this point.

Baseline Level: The analysis at baseline level resembles that at the enhanced level although the potential is some what reduced.

Reduced Level: Again, the analysis reflects the point identified above.

Question 5: How ambitious is the alternative in its need for fiscal and staff resources?

Enhanced Level: This proposal would be one of the less expensive to achieve in terms of funding the enhanced level. Only one new position would be required, a new (term) GS-9 writer/editor. Several other positions would be reallocated.

Baseline Level: This level of service would require that baseline program capacity be sustained. Some assets would be re-allocated.

Reduced Level: Abolish GS-11 district interpreter's position and GS-9 education coordinator position. Significant reductions would occur in NPS seasonal staffing.

Question 6: How well does the alternative meet the needs of the NPS to communicate its mission and programs to the public?

Enhanced: This proposal would very significantly shift the parks' communication capacity and resulting audiences. That portion of the populace that uses the web for information would be well served; visitors who are comfortable using waysides and other media would also benefit. Visitors who do not fall into these categories, and those seeking opportunities to seek information face-to-face, would not be well served. Visitor who do not speak English would also suffer. The communications capacity of the parks would shift, but not necessarily be broadened among those who care about national parks.

Baseline: The effect would be similar to the enhanced level but weaker in terms of benefit for new audiences. The loss of two visitor centers would weaken in-park communication.

Reduced: The effect would be similar to the baseline level but weaker yet in terms of benefit for new audiences. The loss of two visitor centers would weaken in-park communication.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

INTRODUCTION:

At a workshop held on 18-19 October 2005, a group consisting primarily of the staff of the SEKI Division of Interpretation and Cultural Resources and representatives of the Sequoia Natural History Association reviewed and revised the four alternatives for managing a resource education program at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and ultimately selected a preferred alternative. This became the draft preferred alternative and was distributed for public review during the public comment period in March 2006.

DECISION AND BASIS FOR MAKING IT:

In selecting a draft preferred alternative, the workshop team reviewed all the materials and analysis collected for this plan and focused on the overarching question of “what program would best serve the needs of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks?”

At the enhanced capacity level, which is in effect unconstrained by financial limitations, it was clear to the group that the best alternative was the Alternative A – Enhanced, Serve All Audiences, which sought to implement the parks’ new General Management Plan. This represents an ideal plan for resource education at Sequoia and Kings Canyon and a plan that meets agency goals and policies.

At the baseline capacity level, the group again endorsed the Serve All Audiences approach, selecting Alternative A – Baseline. This selection reflects the parks’ commitment to pursuing the balanced program defined in agency policy.

At the reduced capacity level, the group concluded that it was no longer possible to serve all audiences and selected instead Alternative C – Emphasize Park Visitors as the most responsible focus for the resources education program during difficult budget times. This decision was based on the conclusion that at capacity levels below current baseline, trying to serve all audiences resulted in poor service for all groups and that under such circumstances the parks were best served by a focus on visitors.

Based on comments received during the public comment period, minor adjustments were made in the draft preferred alternative. These reflected primarily the need for additional clarity regarding the role of Interpretation in the Giant Forest shuttle system.

The Preferred Alternative:

These three capacity levels have now been brought together as Alternative P – Preferred Alternative, and are found on the following pages.

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
CAPACITY LEVEL: BASELINE
ALTERNATIVE CODE: P-B

DESCRIPTION: Using existing (“baseline”) capacity, continue to provide balanced spectrum of services including visitor orientation, interpretive programs, standards-based educational services and interpretive media. All services limited by capacity constraints.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC, Giant Forest Museum, and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Lodgepole VC daily April through October. Operate Cedar Grove VC daily mid-June through Labor Day.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 40/60% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC if funded by that agency.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>Daily NPS interpretive programming at Cedar Grove, Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills during peak season. Reduced programming in same areas during shoulder seasons. Less-than-daily summer programming at Mineral King.</p> <p>Operate peak-season nature center in Giant Forest/Lodgepole area and provide activities for families with children. Staff primarily with volunteers or partners. Hours and days of operation limited by availability of non-NPS staffing.</p> <p>During off-season, limited NPS programming on selected weekends and holidays at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>Using primarily transportation fee funding, provide shuttle bus guides and/or shuttle bus-stop roving services to support the Giant Forest shuttle system.</p> <p>Roving/assigned station NPS programming daily during peak season at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. Major emphasis sites are Grant Tree, Sherman Tree, and selected picnic and river sites in Hospital Rock / Ash Mountain corridor. Reduced programming at same sites in shoulder season.</p> <p>Limited (less than daily) NPS roving program at Cedar Grove, Crystal Cave, and Mineral King.</p> <p>Off-season NPS roving at selected sites on weekends and holidays only responding to local use needs and staffing availability.</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>Attention balanced primarily between webpage management, publications (park newspaper and brochure), and exhibit projects (primarily FLREA-funded). One GS-11 PFT position (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function.</p> <p>Provide media support for Giant Forest shuttle system including both bus-stop and on-bus materials.</p> <p>Project Manager (term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	<p>One PFT position (ONPS-funded) serves as coordinator for this function. Program will focus on activities such as school groups visiting Grant Grove, teacher training, website material development for off-site use, etc.</p> <p>Continue “Sequoia for Youth” program relying primarily on non-ONPS funding to support activities. Limited ranger time may continue to be invested.</p>
Outreach Education	<p>Seek to establish new program using term employees and outside funding. Implement program only to extent possible using non-ONPS funding.</p>
Public Affairs	<p>Park responds to media inquiries but has only limited proactive PIO capacity. Community outreach activities in the form of talks to organizations, public events attendance, etc., pursued in balance with media work.</p>

	One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer. Fire Education Specialist position staffed if funded by FPA. Seasonal media assistant position staffed if funded by Visitor Protection Division.
Volunteer Management	Collateral duty assigned to Sequoia-South Interpretive District Staff.
Division Management	<p>Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).</p> <p>Chief invests significant time in fundraising activities.</p> <p>If supported by transportation fees, establish LFT position to serve as NPS liaison and COR for Giant Forest shuttle system.</p>
Role of Partners	<p>SNHA provides <60% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers.</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the fee-based Sequoia Field Institute, which offers in-depth, park-related seminars.</p> <p>SNHA operates and staffs the Beetle Rock Education Center.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund cooperates with NPS to raise funds for outreach education.</p>

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
CAPACITY LEVEL: ENHANCED
ALTERNATIVE CODE: P-E

DESCRIPTION: Seek to provide program that meets all agency standards and most GMP goals; provide full spectrum of services including visitor orientation, interpretive programs, standards-based educational services and interpretive media. Enhance service levels at visitor centers; increase walks and talks and roving. Implement significant outreach education program. Improve media services. Make increased use of volunteers.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC, Giant Forest Museum, and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Operate Lodgepole VC daily April through October. Operate Cedar Grove VC daily mid-May through mid-September. Lengthen peak-season operating hours to 7:00 – 20:00 at GGVC, LPVC, GFMU, and FHVC. Provide longer hours at Cedar Grove VC. Increase seasonal staff as required.</p> <p>Provide staffing for a cooperative visitor centers in off-park sites.</p> <p>Restore permanent GS-9 ranger positions at Lodgepole and Cedar Grove.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 60/40% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC if funded by agency.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>Provide substantial and varied program of daily NPS interpretive programming at Cedar Grove, Grant Grove, Giant Forest, Foothills, and Mineral King during peak season. Sustain daily walks at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills during shoulder seasons. Seasonal staff enlarged as required.</p> <p>Provide ranger staff for nature center in Giant Forest/Lodgepole area and schedule activities for families with children.</p> <p>During off-season, provide NPS programming on selected weekends and holidays at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists may present fee-based interpretive seminars offering more in-depth learning opportunities.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>Roving/assigned station NPS programming daily during peak season at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. Major emphasis sites, including Grant Tree, Sherman Tree, Crystal Cave, and selected picnic and river sites in Hospital Rock / Ash Mountain corridor, are reliably staffed during hours of heavy use. Reduced programming at same sites in shoulder seasons.</p> <p>Limited (less than daily) NPS roving program at Cedar Grove and Mineral King.</p> <p>Provide full spectrum of shuttle bus guides and shuttle bus-stop roving services to support the Giant Forest shuttle system.</p> <p>Off -season NPS roving at selected sites at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills on weekends and holidays only.</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>Enhance and augment interpretive media programs, including especially web pages, exhibits, and publications. Create new self-guiding trails using waysides, brochures, or low wattage broadcast systems; add wayside exhibits; add TIS radio systems.</p>

	<p>Provide media support for Giant Forest shuttle system including both bus-stop and on-bus materials.</p> <p>Existing GS-11 shifts to GS-12; serves as media program lead and directly manages publications and exhibits.</p> <p>Add new GS-9 writer/editor position provide text for expanded media program.</p> <p>Add new GS-9 position to manage web pages and other electronic media including TIS radio and in-park video systems operated by concessioners. Position also will handle maintenance of electronic systems.</p> <p>Project Manager (GS-9, term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	Using NPS staff and funds, provide significant program of in-park educational services at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills. Program overseen by Education Specialist (see Outreach Education).
Outreach Education	<p>Implement program that provides substantial, visible, frequent ranger presence in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade classrooms in Tulare/Kings/Fresno county region. Program also provides ranger presence at TCOE's SCICON facility for Tulare County 6th graders as well as for comparable facilities in other Central California counties. Overall program fully integrated and coordinated with educational programs presented by partners including TCOE, USACE, and Sequoia Riverlands Trust.</p> <p>NPS staff enlarged using NPS and donated funds. One PFT GS-11 Education specialist added to existing GS-9 education position; also multiple term and seasonal positions depending upon funding. VIPs recruited to support program.</p> <p>Also area of emphasis for SNHA Sequoia Field Institute. SFI staff present programs which are complementary to NPS effort.</p>
Public Affairs	<p>Public affairs program enhanced to allow more proactive management of media relationship. Community outreach activities in the form of talks to organizations, public events attendance, etc., pursued in balance with media work.</p> <p>One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer. Additional STF position created to increase office capacity.</p> <p>Fire Education Specialist position staffed if funded by FPA.</p>
Volunteer Management	Full-time VIP coordinator position created to recruit and manage staff to support in-park visitor services.
Program Management	<p>Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).</p> <p>Chief Park Interpreter invests significant time in fundraising.</p> <p>If supported by transportation fees, establish PSTF position to serve as NPS liaison and COR for Giant Forest shuttle system.</p>
Role of Partners	<p>SNHA provides approximately 40% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers.</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the fee-based Sequoia Field Institute, which offers in-depth, park-related seminars. Also operates and staffs the Beetle Rock Education Center.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund cooperates with NPS to raise funds for outreach education.</p>

ALTERNATIVES DETAIL SHEET

ALTERNATIVE: PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
CAPACITY LEVEL: REDUCED
ALTERNATIVE CODE: P-R

DESCRIPTION: Focus reduced program primarily on peak season visitors in busiest areas of parks. Sustain limited interpretive programs there to maximum degree possible by reducing NPS visitor orientation and roving. Sustain media programs to mitigate staffing losses. No standards-based educational services provided by NPS within parks.

Work Element:	Service Level
Visitor Centers	<p>Operate Grant Grove (Kings Canyon) VC and Foothills VC daily throughout the year. Limit NPS VC hours to no more than 8:00 to 17:00 hours even at peak season. Extended hours only if staffed by SNHA on a basis that makes economic sense including utility costs.</p> <p>Operate Giant Forest Museum daily except close four weekdays (or turn over to partner) November through March.</p> <p>Discontinue NPS staffing at Lodgepole VC; either close or turn over to partner. Shift staffing to Roving/Assigned Stations duties.</p> <p>Discontinue Cedar Grove VC; either close or turn over to partner or wilderness permit function.</p> <p>Merge Sequoia-North and Sequoia-South Interpretive Districts and abolish one GS-11 district interpreter position.</p> <p>Information desk staffing ratio is approximately 25/75% NPS/SNHA. Also USFS personnel at KCVC if funded by that agency.</p>
Interpretive Programs	<p>Limited daily NPS interpretive programming at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; very limited programming at these sites during shoulder seasons. No NPS program at Cedar Grove or Mineral King.</p> <p>During off-season, very limited NPS programming on selected weekends and holidays at Grant Grove, Giant Forest, and Foothills; programs presented only by year-round staff and only as time allows.</p> <p>No nature center program in Giant Forest/Lodgepole area.</p> <p>Sequoia Field Institute naturalists may present fee-based interpretive programming daily at Grant Grove and Giant Forest during peak season; selected fee-based programs also presented in other areas and during shoulder seasons as funds and demand allow. SFI naturalists also operate fee-based seminar program offering more in-depth learning opportunities. Program scope determined by ability of offering to sustain themselves economically.</p> <p>Daily guided tours at Crystal Cave from early May through October; tours presented by SNHA cave naturalists.</p>
Roving/Assigned Stations	<p>To degree supported by dedicated transportation fee funding, and as determined appropriate, provide shuttle bus guides and/or shuttle bus-stop roving services to support the Giant Forest shuttle system.</p> <p>Roving/assigned station NPS programming daily during peak season at Grant Grove and Giant Forest. Major emphasis sites are Grant Tree and Sherman Tree.</p> <p>Off season NPS roving at selected sites on weekends and holidays only responding to local use needs.</p>
Interpretive Media	<p>Attention focused primarily on webpage management, publications (park newspaper and brochure) management, and exhibit project management (primarily FLREA-funded). One PFT position (ONPS-funded) dedicated 100% to this function.</p>

	<p>If supported by transportation fee funding, provide media support for Giant Forest shuttle system including both bus-stop and on-bus materials.</p> <p>Project Manager (term; LFT; project funded) focuses on FLREA projects.</p>
In-park Education	<p>Discontinue program; abolish GS-9 education coordinator position.</p> <p>SNHA may offer fee-based educational services within park if demand proves sufficient and program can be made self-sustaining.</p>
Outreach Education	<p>Seek to establish program using term employees and outside funding. Implement program only to extent possible using non-ONPS funding.</p> <p>SNHA may offer fee-based educational services outside park if demand proves sufficient and program can be made self-sustaining.</p>
Public Affairs	<p>Park responds to media inquiries but has only limited proactive PIO capacity. Community outreach activities in the form of talks to organizations, public events attendance, etc., pursued in balance with media work.</p> <p>One PFT GS-11 position (ONPS-funded) serves as Public Information Officer. Fire Education Specialist position staffed if funded by FPA. Seasonal media assistant position staffed if funded by Visitor Protection Division.</p>
Volunteer Management	<p>Collateral duty assigned to Sequoia-South Interpretive District Staff.</p>
Program Management	<p>Two PFT positions (ONPS-funded) dedicated to this function in form of Chief Park Interpreter (GS-13) and Office Automation Assistant (GS-6).</p> <p>Chief invests significant time in fundraising activities.</p> <p>If supported by transportation fees, establish term or LFT position to serve as NPS liaison and COR for Giant Forest shuttle system.</p>
Role of Partners	<p>SNHA provides <75% of the staffing necessary year-round to operate the parks' visitor centers.</p> <p>SNHA directly manages all aspects of the Crystal Cave interpretive program, including supervision, training, and interpretive tours.</p> <p>SNHA operates the Sequoia Field Institute, which offers in-depth, park-related seminars on a fee basis. Same program may offer interpretive programs and education programs if demand proves sufficient to sustain effort financially.</p> <p>SNHA may consider closing Beetle Rock Education Center if use and revenue do not justify continued investment in facility.</p> <p>Sequoia Fund cooperates with NPS to raise funds for outreach education.</p> <p>Donation funds may also be sought to sustain media programs and products.</p>

PART III-- APPENDICES

APPENDIX A -PROJECT TEAM

NPS STAFF AT PARK:

Axtell, Craig: Superintendent

Carlton, Mary Anne: Giant Forest Area Interpreter

Crapsey, Malinee: Interpretive Specialist

Graber, David: Senior Scientist

Lyle, Jody: Fire Education Specialist

Matsumoto, Jenny: Interpretive Project Manager

Oberg, Erik: Foothills Area Interpreter

Pfenninger, Paul: (former) Sequoia District Interpreter

Picavet, Alex: Public Information Officer

Pillsbury, Valerie: Kings Canyon District Interpreter

Purchis, Cathy: Grant Grove Area Interpreter

Satnat, Becky: Education Coordinator

Tweed, Wm.: (former) Chief of Interpretation, project coordinator, and primary author

Wilson, Russel J.: Deputy Superintendent

SEQUOIA NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION:

Combs, Dick: Member, Board of Directors

Crane, Debbie: Operations Director

Lockhart, John: (former) Education Director

Tilchen, Mark: Executive Director

OTHERS:

Adams, Deanne: Team Leader for Interpretation, Pacific West Regional Office

Robertson, Denise: Interpretive Ranger, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, Lake Kaweah

APPENDIX B -PLANS AND REPORTS CONSULTED

U.S. National Park Service, *Management Policies*, 2001.

U.S. National Park Service, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, *General Management Plan*, 2006.

-----, *Long Range Interpretive Plan, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks*, 1997.

U.S. National Park Service, University of Idaho Park Studies Unit, *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Visitor Study*, 2002.

APPENDIX C – COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

18-19 October 2004

Kickoff Workshop: NPS and SNHA staff establishes project team, outlines goals, establish work elements, define preliminary optimum plan, and outlines possible

3 February 2005

Internal scoping session with Kings Canyon Management Team

7 February 2005

Internal scoping session with Division of Natural Resources supervisors

8 February 2005

Internal scoping session with SNHA staff

22 February 2005

Internal scoping session with selected NPS seasonal interpreters

8 March 2005

Internal scoping with SNHA board representatives

10 March 2005

Internal scoping with Division of Fire and Visitor Management supervisors

17 March 2005

Scoping Analysis Workshop: Project team meets to review and analyze input from staff scoping sessions.

13 April 2005

Project status report to park management team

26 September 2005

Revised draft of plan discussed with representatives of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Lake Kaweah) and Sequoia Riverlands Trust.

18-19 October 2005

Staff workshop to select preferred alternative

March 2006

Public review period for draft plan. News release issued; draft plan placed in park website, and twenty hard copies mailed to key public officials and partners.

April 2006

Public comment reviewed and plan finalized.